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Purcell and the poetics of artifice : compositional strategies in the fantasias and sonatas

Howard, Alan David

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Purcell and the Poetics of Artifice

Compositional Strategies in the
Fantasias and Sonatas

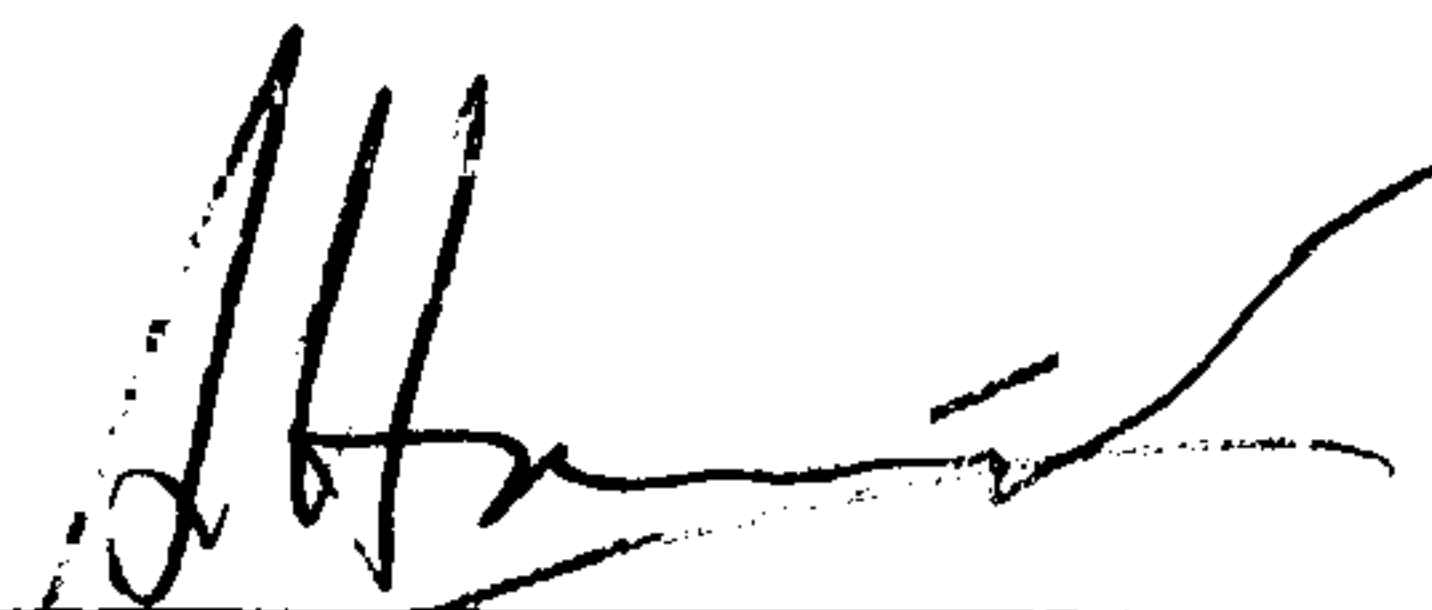
Alan Howard

*Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of Ph.D., King's College, London, August 2006*

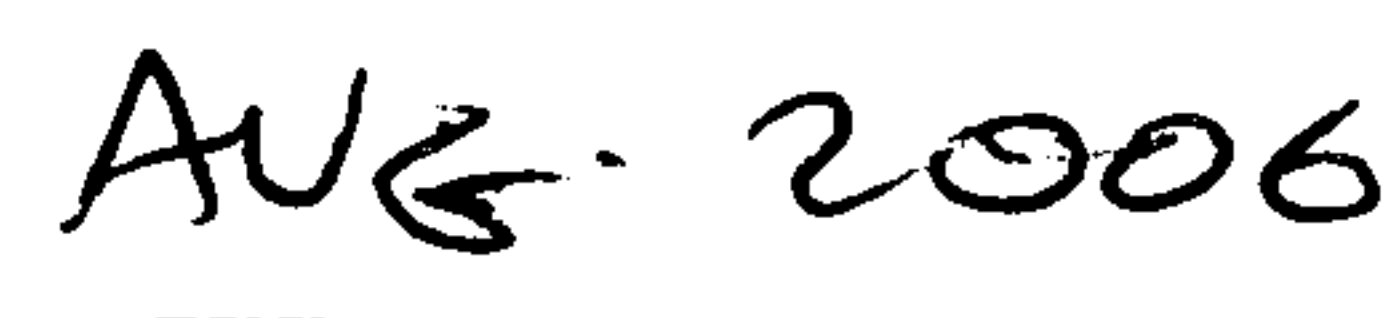


DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following thesis is entirely my own work, and all material derived from other sources, published or unpublished, is clearly identified as such. No part of the thesis has previously been published, or submitted for examination for any qualification either at the University of London or elsewhere.



Alan Howard



date

ABSTRACT

Compared with his vocal music, Purcell's instrumental compositions have attracted little attention from scholars, despite their technical richness, which offers a potentially powerful analytical tool. This study begins with an extended survey of the reception history of Purcell's chamber music, concentrating on the construction of Purcell as a vocal composer and as the focus for English musical nationalism, and the consequences of these phenomena for the modern understanding of his instrumental music. The second chapter considers the analysis of seventeenth-century music, recognising the potential for anachronism in modern analytical paradigms and proposing instead an approach that privileges compositional process. Contemporary theoretical treatises like Purcell's 'The Art of Descant' and Christopher Simpson's *Compendium of Practical Musick* provide essential context to such analysis, both in their contents and by omission.

The central chapters develop and apply this approach in two different ways. An examination of Purcell's fugal techniques in the fantasias and related pieces (Chapter 3) exposes a far greater subtlety of technique than is described in the treatises, allowing the reconstruction of his creative strategies in remarkable detail. The trio sonatas, meanwhile, embody a rather different approach to fugue (Chapter 4); this is contrasted both with that of the fantasias and with contemporary Italian practice, revealing similar musical values to those found in the fantasias despite the modification of technique.

The concluding chapter proposes a poetic context for such 'compositional artifice', by comparing the surviving opinions of Purcell with similar concerns expressed by John Dryden and Sir Christopher Wren. The emerging musical poetics of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries offers a hitherto unavailable context for the rapid disappearance of Purcell's instrumental music from English musical life that was described in Chapter 1. At the same time, it provides new ways of thinking about the expressive potential of this repertoire, that can deepen our enjoyment of it today.

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The idea for this thesis first occurred to me during a faculty colloquium at Cambridge University early in 2003, at which Laurence Dreyfus presented a fascinating paper on J. S. Bach's use of ritornello principles in his Passion arias. Having already read his analyses of Bach's fugues in *Bach and the Patterns of Invention*, I began to see that many of the approaches to musical invention and the manipulation of materials that Dreyfus identified in the music of Bach might equally be observed in Purcell's instrumental music. Happily, Professor Dreyfus agreed to supervise my work, and I am greatly indebted to him for his encouragement and insightful criticism over the last three years, as well as his continued commitment to my work after he moved to Oxford in the final year of my studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1683	Henry Purcell, <i>Sonnata's of III Parts</i> (London: the author, 1683).
1697	Henry Purcell, <i>Ten Sonata's in Four Parts</i> (London: Frances Purcell, 1697).
<i>AD</i>	Henry Purcell, 'The Art of Descant', in <i>An Introduction to the Skill of Musick</i> , by John Playford, 12th edn (London: Henry Playford, 1694), 85-144.
Adams	Martin Adams, <i>Henry Purcell: The Origins and Development of his Musical Style</i> (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).
Lbl Add. 30930	London, British Library Add. MS 30930
Burney	Charles Burney, <i>A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages until the Present Period</i> (London: the author, 1789), repr. New York: Dover, 1957, ed. Frank Mercer, 2 vols.
<i>EM</i>	<i>Early Music</i>
<i>Grove Online</i>	<i>New Grove Online</i> , ed. L. Macy. < http://www.grovemusic.com >
Hawkins	Sir John Hawkins, <i>A General History of the Science and Practice of Music</i> (London: T. Payne, 1776), repr. New York: Dover, 1963, ed. Charles Cudworth, 2 vols.
Holman	Peter Holman, <i>Henry Purcell</i> (Oxford: OUP, 1994).
<i>JAMS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Musicological Society</i>
<i>ML</i>	<i>Music and Letters</i>
<i>MT</i>	<i>Musical Times</i>
North	John Wilson (ed.), <i>Roger North on Music</i> (London: Novello, 1959).
<i>PM</i>	Robert Shay and Robert Thompson, <i>Purcell Manuscripts: The Principal Musical Sources</i> (Cambridge: CUP, 2000).
<i>PR</i>	Michael Burden (ed.), <i>Purcell Remembered</i> (London: Faber and Faber, 1995).
PS / PS(r)	<i>The Works of Henry Purcell</i> , edited under the supervision of the Purcell Society, 32 vols (London: Novello, 1878-1962; rev. edn 1964-).
Tilmouth	Michael Tilmouth, 'The Technique and Forms of Purcell's Sonatas', <i>Music and Letters</i> , 40 (1959), 109-21.
Westrup	Sir Jack Westrup, <i>Purcell</i> , 6th edn (New York: OUP, 1995).
WK	Helene Wessely-Kropik, 'Henry Purcell als Instrumentalkomponist', <i>Studien zur Musikwissenschaft. Beihefte der "Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich"</i> , 22 (1955), 85-141.
Z.	Numbering of Purcell's works according to Franklin B. Zimmerman, <i>Henry Purcell, 1659-1695: An Analytical Catalogue of his Music</i> (London: Macmillan, 1963).

The following will be used to refer to specific parts in music examples:

vln – violin	ten. – (tenor [viol])
tr. – (treble [viol])	bass – [bass viol]

INTRODUCTION

Purcell occupies a somewhat unusual position in the history of English instrumental music. For a composer of his stature, his output of consort music (thirteen complete fantasias and two In nomines, together with four pavans) is considerably smaller than those of the previous two generations, when the consort tradition was at its height.¹ Even if one adds to these works the twenty-two 'trio' sonatas and the assorted orchestral works of the earliest part of Purcell's career, his complete catalogue of instrumental chamber music seems meagre in comparison with that of Jenkins or Locke, Lawes or Coprario. Given that these composers were all (with the exception of Locke) employed principally as composers of consort music, this is perhaps no surprise. Indeed, the fact that there was no longer a place, in the post-Restoration court, for a composer who dedicated his time almost exclusively to consort music, is a good indication of the decline of English consort music that is behind Purcell's comparatively modest contribution to its repertoire.

Yet while this contribution was indeed modest in numerical terms, this is far from the case in terms of the accomplishment of Purcell's highly individual approach to the genres of fantasia and In nomine. Christopher D. S. Field describes Purcell's fantasias as a 'surpassing tribute' to the genre, praising their 'unique brilliance and intensity', and it is these qualities that have contributed to their establishment as 'cornerstones of the modern viol consort repertory', in Peter Holman's words.² From a historical point of view, too, these works are of great importance. While the consort music brings to a close a tradition stretching back almost two centuries, the sonatas provide valuable evidence of the pressures of encroaching Italian fashions, bearing witness both to the reasons behind the eventual obsolescence of chamber music for viols and to the response of a talented composer in a particular culture to the music of another.

It is surprising, therefore, that Purcell's instrumental chamber music has not received more attention from scholars. While a number of articles have explored the

¹ Several other works often described as 'consort music' are written for quite different ensembles, hence their absence here. Peter Holman associates the 'Three Parts upon a Ground' (z. 731) with the three violin and bass grouping of the 'Broken Consort', and the same may be said of a further Pavan in G minor (z. 752); both contrast strongly with the more homogeneous scoring of the fantasias. The four-part Chacony in G minor (z. 730), meanwhile, appears to be orchestral; see Holman, 'Compositional Choices in Henry Purcell's *Three Parts upon a Ground*', *EM*, 29 (2001), 250-61 (pp. 254-55).

² Christopher D. S. Field, 'Fantasia: 1. To 1700', §8 ('Great Britain'), in *Grove Online* (for abbreviations see p. 9 above); Peter Holman and Robert Thompson, 'Purcell: (3) Henry Purcell (ii)', §3 ('Instrumental Music'), in *Grove Online*.

stylistic origins of Purcell's works, and they are given significant space in most comprehensive surveys of the composer's music, the number of studies is small in comparison to the breadth of scholarship surrounding his sacred music, music for the theatre and vocal music for the court. One reason for this under-representation is that instrumental music sits uncomfortably with a number of the orthodoxies that have built up around Purcell since his lifetime, not least the conviction that his position as the foremost composer of vocal music in English formed the greatest part of his legacy. It could admittedly be argued that this discrepancy is legitimate, given the comparative sizes of Purcell's contributions to each of these genres. Conversely, the importance of a particular body of works is not necessarily in proportion to its size: it is my conviction that the appearance of these works at this time in Purcell's career, and the degree of their concentration on particular compositional problems, the solutions to which would occupy him for the rest of his life, makes them crucial to the understanding of his development as a composer. As such, they occupy a far more important position amongst his works than has hitherto been recognised.

The problem with the literature surrounding Purcell's instrumental chamber music is compounded by an overwhelming preoccupation with a limited range of central issues, the most prominent among which are the surviving manuscript sources, the differing motivations behind the composition of Purcell's works in the two genres of fantasia and sonata, issues of performance practice, and the dates of composition of the sonatas. Behind almost all of these discussions is the more fundamental and all-embracing concern to determine on the one hand the nature and extent of the influence of the Italian sonata on Purcell, and on the other, the importance of his engagement with the native consort music of the earlier seventeenth century. Again, a number of orthodoxies prevail in this discourse, concerning Purcell's supposed conservative attitude and his ultimate failure to adopt the idiom of the Italian sonata.

One of the frustrations of studying Purcell's approach to the composition of these works is the paucity of contemporary documentation concerning his artistic goals and his attitudes towards different musical styles. The surviving sources tend to offer tantalising snippets of information, often asking new questions rather than resolving existing ones. As a result, successive writers have been forced to rely on the same evidence, often speculating against similar backgrounds and even repeating the opinions of previous commentators. Roger North, a figure who is almost ubiquitously

cited in studies of Purcell's sonatas, could almost have been foreseeing this problem when he wrote in his *Memoires of Musick* (1720) that:

In matters of Antiquity there are two extreames, 1. a totall neglect, and 2. perpetuall guessing; between which proper evidences are the temper; that is, if there be any, to make the best of them; if none, to desist.³

If the study of Purcell's instrumental chamber music has come to a similar impasse, North's plea for silence given the absence of 'proper evidences' seems unsatisfactory, since it leaves so much unclear about how Purcell viewed his compositions in this genre. Indeed, there are aspects of the existing literature that might suggest new ways of proceeding, principally through an examination of its methodology. Of particular importance in this respect is the dominant mode of analysis, which ever since the late eighteenth century has sought to account for aspects of Purcell's style by establishing patterns of influence. Despite the obvious insights available from such an approach, its limitations and potential pitfalls are too seldom subjected to critical examination. In the first place, it is susceptible to the kind of 'perpetuall guessing' that North so disliked, since its conclusions can rarely amount to more than informed speculation. Secondly, and more seriously, it focuses attention away from the activities of the composer, instead understanding the characteristics of Purcell's music according to its fidelity, or otherwise, to the stylistic expectations established by the putative influence.

This observation forms the background to my own approach to the analysis of these works, which attempts to restore priority to Purcell's agency as a composer by examining how the music might have been composed, by using the techniques of imitation and canon as an analytical framework to understand the decisions that he took as he worked. By concentrating not simply on the similarities between Purcell's works and the music of his predecessors and contemporaries (or indeed his successors), but on how Purcell made use of what he learnt from these sources, and what it was about them that seemed to interest him, it is possible to gain a much clearer picture of his priorities as a composer, and the reasons behind some of the important stylistic characteristics that we recognise in his work. This approach has the added attraction of focussing analytical observations on techniques that might have been familiar to the composer, rather than relying on methods developed in

³ North, p. 317. (See p. 9 above)

conjunction with other, often later repertoires. At the same time, one can begin to see how these aspects of Purcell's music relate to the wider artistic and intellectual concerns of his close contemporaries.

At the heart of this understanding of Purcell's chamber music is a re-evaluation of his relationship with the music of past composers, and in particular the status of complex imitative textures in his style. These have often been taken as markers of conservatism on Purcell's part, despite the fact that even the most elaborate passages of counterpoint in his music are unmistakably born of the post-Restoration baroque, and not of some desire to revive or pastiche an earlier style. For all that Purcell was interested in the music of his English (and continental) predecessors, the idea that he was concerned with the preservation and maintenance of earlier musical styles on principle, that he was conservative by instinct, simply does not seem to fit with the character of his music. Rather I would suggest that his profound interest in, and sustained engagement with the music of earlier seventeenth-century composers in the years around 1680 stemmed from his fascination with the degree of technical skill which they so often demonstrated: the level of musical artifice that they achieved, which was so lacking in the most fashionable styles of the 1670s. Not only does this fit well with his exploration of the genres of consort music, but it is equally applicable to the sonatas. Rather than observing in them a flawed attempt to imitate the latest Italian style, which ultimately fails because of Purcell's perceived conservatism, it becomes possible to view both Purcell's enthusiastic embracing of the Italian genre and his continued interest in fugal techniques as different aspects of the same underlying principle of compositional artifice as an artistic goal.

While these approaches to Purcell's instrumental music form the central focus of my thesis, they cannot exist in isolation. Purcell's reputation in the literature forms an important background to my approach, just as some of the characteristics of that literature have suggested ways to proceed in new directions. Indeed, the history of the reception of Purcell's music in cultural and scholarly debate is a rich and largely neglected topic, and one that promises considerable insight not just into the importance of Purcell's legacy but also into English musical life in general since his lifetime. It is in this spirit that I begin this study with an extended exploration of this history, by way of a prelude to the more detailed discussion that follows.

CHAPTER 1

The Reception of Purcell's Instrumental Music, 1695-2000

WESTMINSTER ABBEY, TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 1695

Dr. *Purcel* was Interred at *Westminster* on *Tuesday* night in a magnificent manner. He is much lamented, being a very great Master of Musick.¹

The musical world must have seemed a desolate place for the musician working in London in November 1695. So soon after the loss of Queen Mary, its most prominent and beneficent musical patron, the sudden death of England's leading composer was a crushing blow, especially falling, as it had done, on the eve of St Cecilia's day. One can only imagine the grief of Purcell's colleagues, gathered at Westminster Abbey to honour him by performing once more the funeral music he had composed for Mary some eight months previously. More than likely, among the mourners was the anonymous author of the published *Poem Occasioned on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell*:

What do I hear, what dismal Groans,
What Sights [*sic; recte* 'Sighs'], what Shreiks, what melancholy Moans,
Now spread themselves o're all the Pensive Plains,
And tears the breasts of all the tender Swains,
'Tis for *Strephon* Dead and gone
[...]
Now silent lies his Lyre,
No longer warms our hearts into desire,
For dead is he who could our Passions move,
Who best could gentle thoughts inspire,
Who best could fan the amorous fire,
Make us at once submit, and own the Pow'r of Love.²

¹ *The Post Boy*, 26-28 November 1695, p. 1; quoted in *PR*, p. 114. (For abbreviations see p. 9 above)

² Anonymous, *A Poem Occasioned on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell, late Musician-in-Ordinary to his Majesty [...] By a Lover of Music* (London: J. Whitlock, 1696), pp. 2-3; quoted in Franklin B. Zimmerman, *Henry Purcell, 1659-1695: His Life and Times* (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 332-3. *Early English Books Online* attributes the poem to one Samuel Chidley (<<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>>, accessed 4 July 2006), but I have been unable to substantiate this attribution elsewhere; in the print edition of Donald Wing's *Short Title Catalogue* (2nd edn, 3 vols; New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1972-88) it is listed as anonymous. Mid-century Leveller and pamphleteer Samuel Chidley is thought to have died childless around 1672; see Ian J. Gentles, 'Chidley, Samuel', in

The language admittedly verges on the histrionic – though in this respect it is hardly unusual amongst contemporary poetry, especially concerning the death of a prominent personality – but it leaves no doubt as to the depth of feeling it conveys. Purcell, universally acknowledged as England's greatest composer, the 'pride and darling of the stage' and almost the sole manifestation of that English musical genius that was touted so highly above that of the Italians and French by Dryden and others, was suddenly lost to the world.³ Even the optimism of the inscription Lady Howard placed beneath the organ in the Abbey conceals, or rather fails to conceal, an almost palpable sense of loss at Purcell's death:

Here Lyes
HENRY PURCELL, Esq.;
Who left this life
And is gone to that Blessed Place,
Where only his Harmony
can be exceeded.⁴

Why begin a study of Purcell's instrumental music with his death? In one sense, this is an event of the least possible significance to our understanding of Purcell: for all that it represented a watershed in the musical life of late seventeenth-century London, it is only at major anniversaries, with their attendant concerts, books and increased record sales, that it seems important today. To begin with Purcell's death serves as a reminder, however, that the composer we know survives for us almost exclusively in the accounts of others. In a society that celebrated so conspicuously the great names of classical literature and learning it was inevitable that 'British worthies' like Chaucer and Shakespeare should be similarly remembered, and in claiming Purcell's name for posterity, contemporaries could simultaneously assert the right of music to stand alongside literature as a manifestation of the British artistic genius. The Duke of Buckingham acknowledged the importance of posthumous reputation in his own 'Ode on the Death of Purcell', when he wrote that

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, ed. by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37279>> [accessed 4 July, 2006].

³ The quotation is from the same anonymous *Poem Occasioned on the Death of Mr Henry Purcell* quoted above; see Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. 331. For Dryden see, for example, the epistle (written by Dryden despite the published ascription to Purcell) to Henry Purcell, *Dioclesian* (London: J. Heptinstall, 1691), quoted in *PR*, pp. 88-90.

⁴ Tablet placed in Westminster Abbey, quoted in *PR*, p. 114. The apparent ambiguity of the inscription results from its archaic grammar and a (now obsolete) usage of the word 'only'; it can be rendered more comprehensible by substituting 'alone' for 'only'. Hence Purcell now resides in that place where, alone among all places, his harmony can be exceeded.

'Tis no little proof we have
 That part of us survives the grave,
 And in our fame below still bears a share.
 Why is the future else so much our care,
 Ev'n in our last moments of despair,
 And death despised for fame by all wise and brave?⁵

What Buckingham ignores, however, is his own complicity in the very process he describes: his emphasis on the desire of the individual to *achieve* posthumous fame obscures the fact that the ultimate form that that fame will take can only be determined by those who survive and their successors.

Our Purcell lives on only in the aggregate of writings about his life and music over the last three centuries or so, and his music sounds only through the interpretations of modern performers (though that is a whole other debate). This becomes increasingly clear as one reads through the secondary literature on Purcell. His is a life built on scant evidence, which has crystallised over time into a large body of received wisdom that is often resistant to new approaches and particular lines of inquiry. Before attempting to add to or modify the Purcell of the popular imagination, therefore, one must understand how that particular construct came to be as it is today. In so doing, we gain insight into the kinds of relationships, pressures and ideological concerns that shaped the decisions of Purcell's earlier documenters and biographers; indeed, by seeking to understand the questions posed by these people, it is possible to regain a sense of how Purcell's music and musicality might have been differently portrayed.

One of the most enduring tropes of Purcellian literature in the years immediately following his death was that of Purcell as *Orpheus Britannicus*. This sobriquet seems to have first arisen with the publication of Henry Playford's anthology of Purcell's songs of the same name, perhaps suggested by Dryden's reference in the elegy that headed the collection.⁶ As Richard Lockett notes, Purcell was by no means the first to be honoured with this particular epithet: 'the significant factor [...] is not any inherent originality in the forms and language with which Purcell's contemporaries mourned him [...] but the way in which these commonplaces became definitive; the substance of what men felt was for once appropriate to, and indeed appropriative of, the

⁵ John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, *Ode on the Death of Henry Purcell*; quoted in Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. 355. Although not published in the seventeenth century, Augustus Hughes-Hughes's short article in *MT*, 37 (1896), p. 85 notes that the poem was included in the collected edition of Sheffield's works issued by his widow in 1729 and again in 1740.

⁶ Purcell, *Orpheus Britannicus* [Book I] (London: Henry Playford, 1698).

available means of expression'.⁷ In other words, the mythical figure of Orpheus, so long a commonplace of Renaissance discussions of music, became much more than a simple analogy in the discourse surrounding Purcell's death. Instead of simply providing a convenient classical metaphor for the rhetorical force of musical expression, it furnished a whole system of understanding Purcell's music and its importance to the national identity. For the author of another anonymous ode to Purcell,

The truthless Tales, which frantick Poets tell
Of *Thebes*, and moving Stones, and Journeys down to Hell,
Were only Prophecies of Musick's force, which we
Have wonderfully seen fulfill'd in Thee.⁸

The result, both here and in the wider collection of elegiac material for Purcell, is not dissimilar to the process that Paul Hammond sees operating in the great translations of classical texts of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, which '[reimagine] the original according to the ideals of the present, while redescribing the present in terms of this irrecoverable past'.⁹ No matter that, in this case, the 'past' is a mythological one, since in the process of appropriation 'past and present are reciprocally mythologized'; once again we are reminded of the heavily constructed nature of Purcell's modern image.¹⁰ Given the importance of the Orpheus trope to so much of the elegiac material written shortly after Purcell's death, the examination of its specific connotations forms an essential background to any understanding of the earliest modes of Purcellian reception, and their influence on the succeeding generations of musicians, audiences and scholars.

ORPHEUS BRITANNICUS

Even when understood simply as a measure of the musical esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries, the comparison with Orpheus yields a powerful sense of Purcell's pre-eminence among the musicians of his time in England. In alluding to

⁷ Richard Lockett, "'Or rather our musical Shakspeare": Charles Burney's Purcell', in *Music in Eighteenth-Century England: Essays in Memory of Charles Cudworth*, ed. by Christopher Hogwood and Richard Lockett (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 59-77 (p. 62).

⁸ Anonymous, 'Another Ode on the same occasion. By a Person of Quality', in Purcell, *Orpheus Britannicus I*, p. iv; also in Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. 329.

⁹ Paul Hammond, 'Classical Texts: Translations and Transformations', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1650-1740*, ed. by Stephen N. Zwicker (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 143-61 (p. 158).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

the Orphean mythology as prophetic, rather than quasi-historical, the anonymous author of the lines quoted above lionized Purcell's achievements by relegating the considerable musical powers of Orpheus to the status of a mere foreshadowing. Such a strategy would have been all the more compelling given the familiarity of Orpheus's powers to Restoration readers, not only through the original classical sources, but also in important translations such as George Sandys's influential *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished*.¹¹ According to Ovid in Sandys's words, Orpheus's musical powers were so potent as to interrupt even the ceaseless punishments of the damned in Hades:

While thus he sung, and struck the quavering strings,
The bloodless Shadows wept: nor flattering Springs
Tempt *Tantalus*, *Ixions* Wheele stood still,
Their Urn the *Belides* no longer fill:
The Vultures feed not, *Tityus* left to grone:
And *Sisyphus* sate listning on his Stone.¹²

When viewed in the context of the ensuing reception, however, it is not just the general allusion to Orpheus's musical powers that proves to have been influential. The specific application of this epithet to Purcell in the context of late seventeenth-century musical politics in England represented an overt claim for the supremacy of English music, and Purcell's fundamental contribution to that tradition, the repercussions of which can still be detected in the earliest modern musical scholarship of the twentieth century. Among the examples in *Orpheus Britannicus*, Henry Hall was perhaps the most explicit author to make such a claim, in addressing himself 'To the Memory of [his] Dear Friend Mr. Henry Purcell':

How can I e're enough the Man admire,
Who's rais'd the *British* o're the *Thracian* Lyre!
That *Bard* could make the Savage-kind obey,
But thou hast tam'd yet greater Brutes than they:
Who e're like *Purcell* cou'd our Passions move!
Who ever sang so feelingly of Love!¹³

¹¹ George Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished* (London, 1626). Sandys's work was still very much current in the latter part of the century, having been reprinted as late as 1690; all subsequent references to his work are to this, the fifth edition (London: A. Roper, 1664). For a general commentary on Sandys's translation see Lee T. Percy, *The Mediated Muse: English Translations of Ovid, 1560-1700* (Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String, 1984), pp. 37-99. Apart from the *Metamorphoses*, other classical sources of the story of Orpheus include Appollodorus's *Library of Greek Mythology* (1.3.2) and Virgil's *Georgics* (4.456).

¹² Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, p. 192.

¹³ Henry Hall, 'To the Memory of my Dear Friend Mr. Henry Purcell', in Purcell, *Orpheus Britannicus I*, p. vi; also quoted in Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. 348.

Hall's poem draws attention to two key features of Purcell reception in the years following his death, both of which proved crucial to the subsequent understanding of the composer. Firstly, the power of Purcell's music is associated principally with his vocal output: the notion of Purcell himself 'singing' through his music is common to much of the poetry printed in *Orpheus Britannicus*. What is intended here is not, of course, a recollection of Purcell's own performance style or virtuosity. It is, however, a fascinating insight into the changing status of the composer compared to that of the performer: the qualities of expression and declamation previously understood as part of the technique of the performer can now be attributed with confidence to the composer of the music. This, incidentally, is the source of the confusion surrounding the much-discussed ambiguity of Motteux's statement that the second stanza of *Hail, bright Cecilia* was 'sung with incredible Graces by Mr. *Purcell* himself'.¹⁴

Secondly, it is notable that Purcell is styled, both by Hall and others, the '*British Orpheus*', not 'New', 'Modern', or any number of appropriate adjectives that could equally have been chosen. The national element here reflects the contemporary struggle to find a prominent place for English music in a wider European context, and in the later eighteenth century would nourish an important attempt to define native musical tradition, thereby compensating for the domination of Italian opera. Still later, the nationalist element of Purcellian scholarship resurfaces in the context of the leading Austro-German musical aesthetic of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the notion of Purcell as a national musical icon is therefore an important part of the reception of Purcell up to the present day. Despite the obvious connections between Purcell's images as a vocal composer and as a focus for nationalism, not least in the importance to both of Purcell's settings of vernacular texts, it is simplest to treat the two topics in turn.

Vocal Music

In one sense it is not at all surprising that the poems and elegies printed at the front of *Orpheus Britannicus* celebrate Purcell's achievements as a vocal composer: the collection was, after all, an anthology of songs, not instrumental music. On the other hand, the very existence of such a volume, and the fact that it was this collection of

¹⁴ Motteux, *Gentleman's Journal* (January 1692), p. 5; quoted in *PR*, p. 22.

works above all others that came to symbolise the most treasured part of Purcell's output, attests independently to the particular importance of his songs as the musical legacy to which Purcell's contemporaries clung. Henry Playford makes it clear in the course of his address 'The Bookseller to the Reader' that the book was much expanded from its original proportions in order to have it 'as compleat as possibly could be made, both in regard to the Memory of that great Master, and the Satisfaction of all that buy it'.¹⁵ He goes on to explain the concentration on vocal music, noting that

The Author's extraordinary Talent in all sorts of Musick is sufficiently known, but he was especially admir'd for the *Vocal*, having a peculiar Genius to express the Energy of *English* Words, whereby he mov'd the Passions of his Auditors.¹⁶

The formula was obviously a success, since Playford brought out a second book in 1702 and the two volumes went through a series of editions in the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Indeed, the ten years after Purcell's death saw the publication of a large corpus of his vocal music, including some 51 separate publications of individual numbers from the theatre music and court odes, and no fewer than twelve different anthologies, several of which received second and third editions within this same period of time.¹⁷ By contrast, the instrumental music maintained a considerably lower profile. Between 1695 and 1705, Purcell's instrumental music appeared in only fifteen publications issued in London, and of these only the 1697 *Sonata's in Four Parts* and John Walsh's 1704 edition of the 'Golden' sonata (Z. 810; number 9 of the same set) contained Purcell's music exclusively. Many of the other publications were essentially musical tutors (*The Dancing Master*, *The Harpsichord Master*, *The Division Violin*) containing just one or two pieces by Purcell, often adapted from the theatre music; clearly these are not comparable to the editions of his vocal music.

Much of the activity of music publishers in these years appears to have sought to exploit the market for Purcell's vocal music, a demand that was itself fed by the continuing popularity of his works on the stage.¹⁸ It was no accident that the decline charted by Richard Lockett, and neatly illustrated by the lamentable quality of the

¹⁵ Henry Playford, 'The Bookseller to the Reader', in Purcell, *Orpheus Britannicus I*, p. iii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. iii [original emphasis].

¹⁷ Drawn from Appendix IV of Franklin B. Zimmerman, *Henry Purcell, 1659-1695: An Analytical Catalogue of his Music* (London: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 492-500.

¹⁸ Lockett, 'Charles Burney's Purcell', pp. 63-64.

later editions and imitations of *Orpheus Britannicus* (Walsh, 1721 and 1724, then Johnson's *Collection of Songs [...] taken from Orpheus Britannicus*, c. 1755) coincided with the ultimate eclipse of the English semi-opera by Italian opera, and of Purcell by Handel.¹⁹ In the case of the instrumental music, meanwhile, the market for complex works like Purcell's sonatas had never been strong. With the domestic viol consort having passed from popularity, instrumental music became the province of professional musicians who played to paying audiences, and as a result the demand for published music was low. In addition, imported prints and manuscript copies of Italian sonatas were widely available.²⁰

Whatever the reasons behind it, Purcell's reputation for vocal music lasted well into the latter part of the eighteenth century. For Sir John Hawkins the fact that 'Purcell is chiefly celebrated for his vocal compositions' was not even worthy of further examination, and simply taken as a premise for a discussion of the state of the art of singing in the Restoration years.²¹ The pioneering *Histories* of Hawkins and of Charles Burney are the first works in which we gain a sense of the writers' historical distance from Purcell and from the culture in which he wrote his music, and as such mark an important stage in the history of Purcellian literature.

Burney's account in particular demonstrates the importance of Purcell's reputation as a composer of vocal music in general, and the influence of *Orpheus Britannicus* in particular, to the late eighteenth-century view of Purcell. Although he was well acquainted with Purcell's instrumental music as well as his vocal – he gives a brief mention to the sonatas and notes that Purcell's symphonies and act tunes were used in the London theatres in his own memory – by far the greater part of his discussion is given over to the vocal music.²² The form and contents of the two volumes of *Orpheus Britannicus* occupy no fewer than ten pages out of a total of just twenty-seven given to Purcell. Even more revealingly, when he adopts a more philosophical tone Burney inevitably returns to the vocal music:

Though his dramatic style and recitative were formed in a great measure on French models, there is a latent power and force in his expression of English words, whatever be the subject, that will make an unprejudiced native of this island feel,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

²⁰ Holman, pp. 92-93. (For abbreviations see p. 9 above)

²¹ Hawkins, II, 753.

²² Burney, II, 403 (sonatas); 389, footnote 'n' (theatre act tunes).

more than all the elegance, grace, and refinement of modern Music less happily applied, can do.²³

Clearly Burney understands Purcell's greatest achievement to be in the musical setting of the English language. Yet even this characteristic could not rescue Purcell from increasing obscurity. 'So much is our great musician's celebrity already consigned to tradition, that it will soon be as difficult to find his songs, or at least to *hear* them, as those of his predecessors Orpheus and Amphion, with which Cerberus was lulled to sleep, or the city of Thebes constructed'.²⁴

Burney's *History* is primarily, at least in its treatment of English music from 1650 onwards, a history of how the Italian style came to dominate and in particular, the rise of Italian opera in English musical culture. He was heavily reliant on the writings of Roger North (who was himself notoriously biased towards the Italian style) in many details, not least in the section following that on Purcell describing the 'Progress of the Violin in England, to the end of the last century' in which he reprints whole pages from North's *Memoirs of Musick* verbatim.²⁵ Burney compares Purcell's sonatas to those of Corelli and finds the former 'barbarous' by comparison; given his greater interest in vocal music in the first place, it is little surprise that Purcell's instrumental music is given short shrift.²⁶

Hawkins, on the other hand, is much more favourably disposed towards instrumental music. We sense that he shares the opinion he relates about Purcell's sonatas, that 'in respect of instrumental composition, the difference between Purcell and Corelli is less than it may seem'.²⁷ This degree of sympathy, however, only serves to re-emphasise the difference Hawkins observes between Purcell's achievements in the vocal and instrumental genres. In the end he is unable to praise Purcell's sonatas outright, preferring instead to make excuses for their deficiency: 'These compositions are greatly superior to any of the kind published before his time; and if they fall short of his other works, the failure is to be attributed to the state of instrumental music in his time, which was hardly above mediocrity'.²⁸ In an important sense this was a necessary strategy for Hawkins. In a climate in which instrumental music was

²³ *Ibid.*, II, 404.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 380.

²⁵ Compare *ibid.*, II, 407-9 with North, pp. 355-57.

²⁶ Burney, II, 403.

²⁷ Hawkins, II, 755.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 754.

becoming the bearer of the dominant aesthetic, Purcell's status as a master would be severely damaged if his instrumental music was understood as 'barbarous': it was therefore critical that the sonatas were understood in the context of the music that had gone before them. To this end Hawkins takes pains to show both how modern instrumental music attained its exalted status and why Purcell could not be expected to have lived up to its expectations:

Lully and Corelli are to be looked on as the first great improvers of that kind of instrumental harmony which for full half a century has been practised and admired throughout Europe. The works of the latter of these were not published [in England] until a few years before Purcell's death, so that unless we suppose that he had seen them in manuscript, it may be questioned whether they ever came to his hands; and therefore who those famed Italian masters were whom he professes to have imitated in the composition of his first sonatas, we are at a loss to discover.²⁹

This is just the first appearance in this account of an issue, that of Purcell's stylistic antecedents, which would prove to be one of the most enduring of all approaches to his instrumental music. While its provenance can be traced back to Purcell himself, it was Hawkins who first posed the question to the composer's modern interpreters, and as such this passage represents one of the most important early attempts to account for the characteristics of Purcell's sonatas.

Burney and Hawkins present the two strongest manifestations of their time, of Purcell's reputation as a vocal composer and its implications for the understanding of his instrumental music. Neither seems to have known of the consort pieces at all, and while Burney all but ignores the sonatas as well, Hawkins denigrates their artistic status and modern relevance even as he attempts to integrate them into a more balanced account of Purcell's oeuvre. In one or other of these forms, the domination of the literature by Purcell's vocal music continues to resurface throughout the many studies that have appeared since their day. The first modern biography of Purcell, for example, contains almost no evidence of the richness of Purcell's instrumental legacy. William H. Cummings, editor of the then newly-begun Purcell Society edition, published his *Purcell* in 1881 hoping 'that this little work may be the forerunner of other Purcell studies', presumably including not just 'further details respecting Purcell's ancestry, descendants, and family', but also some comment on the music.³⁰ On the other hand, it is possible that Cummings saw the work of presenting Purcell's

²⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 754-55.

³⁰ William H. Cummings, *Purcell* (London: Sampson Low, 1881), p. viii.

works in a complete and authoritative edition as more important than any scholarly engagement with his style and technique.

At any rate, Cummings's is essentially a documentary biography, and as such, his emphasis on material relating to vocal music results from the paucity of surviving sources relating to the instrumental music; once again, his portrayal of Purcell can therefore be traced directly to the body of works published shortly after the composer's death. Since the fantasias existed only in manuscript, their existence is mentioned only in passing, and Cummings even suggests, on the rather flimsy evidence of the catch 'Of all the instruments that are' (Z. 263), written for John Gostling, that Purcell 'detested' the '*viol da gamba*'.³¹ His treatment of the sonatas is limited to a presentation of advertisements concerning the issue of the 1683 *Sonatas of Three Parts*, and a reprint of Purcell's preface 'to the reader' from the same publication.³² Cummings's life of Purcell remains a useful collection of documentary evidence, more comprehensive, though smaller in scope and often frustratingly short on bibliographic information, than Michael Burden's more recent *Purcell Remembered* (1995). As an introduction to the music, vocal or instrumental, however, it has little to offer.

Moving into the twentieth century, the image of Purcell as primarily a vocal composer continues to hold sway with the next generation of biographers. It is true that the publication of both the complete set of sonatas (as volumes 5 and 7 of the Purcell Society edition, 1893 and 1896 respectively) and the fantasias (in an edition edited by André Mangeot and Peter Warlock, 1927) meant that for the first time these works were available to the general public, and of course more readily available to scholars of Purcell's music. This is to some extent reflected in the writings of the early twentieth century, but the enduring bias against this repertoire continued to exert a much stronger influence on the literature. A. K. Holland's 1932 *Henry Purcell: The English Musical Tradition* is typical in this respect. Holland's admiration of the instrumental music, and the fantasias in particular, is obvious in the twelve pages he devotes to this portion of Purcell's oeuvre. These pages, however, come at the end of a long chapter on 'Elements of Style', itself only one of three chapters in the section

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 31. His suggestion presumably rests on an assumption that the onomatopoeic words in the final two couplets ('whet', 'sweep', 'zingle', 'zitzanzounds') are intended as derogatory. The catch is printed in PS 22, p. 9. (For abbreviations see p. 9 above)

³² Cummings, *Purcell*, pp. 36-39.

dealing with 'The Music'. The remaining two chapters are clearly conceived in the context of an understanding of Purcell as a vocal composer, and consequently contain no discussion of the instrumental music; they tackle, respectively, Purcell's 'Poetic Materials' and the interaction of 'Music and spectacle' (primarily an account of Purcell's theatre music).³³

Yet with Holland, for the first time in the literature on Purcell, one glimpses some of the problems his music posed for early musicologists: 'If the dates were not apparently unchallengeable we should find it hard to believe that certain of the Fantasies were written by a young man of twenty-one. With such beginnings in mind, it is manifestly easier to speak of change rather than development'.³⁴ Whereas the outputs of German masters like Bach, Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms and Schoenberg could each be understood to follow a common stylistic trajectory, culminating in a highly contrapuntal 'late style', Purcell's music almost perversely seemed to have followed the opposite path.³⁵ Although it was possible to observe a general tendency towards a more Italianate concerted style in his later years, this did not compensate for the fact that, as Holland observes, Purcell's most intensely contrapuntal works had appeared not in his later years, but right at the beginning of his career.

Such a phenomenon, had it been observed in one of the more central canonic composers, might well have had an important influence on the development of the standard musicological paradigms that we recognise (and often seek to undermine) today. Purcell and his scholars, however, have always occupied something of a peripheral position in European musicology, with the result that, rather than influencing the development of the discipline itself, Purcell's biographers have tended to submit to its dominant ways of thinking in an effort to secure a place for him in the canon. This has resulted in the strong emphasis on his development towards the concerted style of his music in the 1690s, often described as being closer to 'tonality' as we understand that term. Such a model accorded strongly with the emphasis on the theatre music and its increasingly Italianate qualities in the literature from Purcell's

³³ A. K. Holland, *Henry Purcell: The English Musical Tradition* (London: Bell, 1932), pp. 149-191 and 192-235 respectively.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³⁵ Such models of development during composers' careers are often traced to the influential 'three-period' model of Beethoven's career popularised by Wilhelm von Lenz in *Beethoven et ses Trois Styles* (St Petersburg: Bernard, 1852). Bach's music is often portrayed along similar lines; see, for example, Malcolm Boyd, *Bach* (London: Dent, 1983), pp. 213-14.

own generation and in Burney's history, so it seemed a natural approach to the composer and his music.

1937 saw the appearance of J. A. Westrup's *Purcell*, but even here it seems the importance of the instrumental works is underplayed.³⁶ Still the classic life-and-works study of the composer, Westrup's biography has remained in print almost constantly throughout its seventy-year history. Like Holland, Westrup effectively divides his book in two, dealing with biographical details first (chapters 1-7), then musical commentary second (chapters 10-16).³⁷ The chapter dealing with the instrumental music comes at the very end of the musical section, after no fewer than three chapters on music for the stage and one each on the court odes and the sacred music, and followed only by a chapter entitled 'Style and Development'. The opening sentence of this chapter ('Purcell's importance as an instrumental composer has already been mentioned') does little to alter the impression that Westrup's treatment of this repertoire was something of an afterthought, especially since the majority of earlier references simply documented the existence of works, manuscripts and publications; the implied consideration of the wider significance of Purcell's instrumental output is nowhere to be found.³⁸ Nor does it seem likely that Westrup's decision to leave the instrumental music until last had anything to do with a desire to suggest that it was Purcell's greatest achievement, thereby drawing a useful parallel with the instrumental music of the great German composers. If this had been the case, his decision to conclude the chapter with a discussion of Purcell's keyboard works, which he describes as 'relatively unimportant' and 'slight and sometimes inconclusive', would seem strange to say the least.³⁹

Wider studies of Baroque music have tended to take Westrup's study as the basis for their discussion of Purcell, with the result that the image of Purcell most often conveyed to students and specialists in other composers has been that of the vocal composer. The most obvious example is Bukofzer's treatment of Purcell in *Music in the Baroque Era*, in which the discussion of the instrumental music occupies exactly

³⁶ See p. 9 above for full reference.

³⁷ The division is not stated explicitly here, as it is in Holland, *Purcell*. The two chapters omitted from my description deal respectively with 'Aspects of the Period', a summary of Restoration culture in general and the state of music in mid-century London, and 'Music and Drama', a description of the development of English musical drama.

³⁸ Westrup, p. 222.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-23.

the same 'also-wrote' position as in Westrup's book, and gives the reader almost no indication at all of the richness of these works.⁴⁰ Even in the more recent specialist literature, Purcell's music for the stage is still the only genre to have generated an independent book-length study: Curtis Price's exhaustive *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*.⁴¹ Price later edited the volume of *Purcell Studies* issued by Cambridge University Press to celebrate the tercentenary of the composer's death, which contains no chapter at all on the chamber music for strings and only a seven-page discussion, by Price himself, of a recently-discovered manuscript of keyboard music.⁴² Martin Adams's important *Henry Purcell: The Origins and Development of his Musical Style* discusses the instrumental music at some length, but of the more recent biographies, Peter Holman's *Purcell* is the only one to discuss the music in detail, and his chapter on the chamber music is largely reworked from his article in *The Purcell Companion*.⁴³ It seems that the widespread conception of Purcell as primarily a composer of vocal works is hardly less prevalent today than it was at the time of Purcell's death, or indeed at any time since.

The concentration on Purcell's vocal music is not in itself a bad thing; in purely numerical terms it is strongly representative of his œuvre. Nevertheless, in focussing on the large vocal repertoire it is easy to overlook the extraordinary fertility of Purcell's invention in the instrumental works, which has the potential to reveal far more in some aspects of his approach to composition in the early part of his career and even towards the end of his life. The sheer amount and quality of music composed for the stage will always attract scholarly attention, but need not result in the neglect of other aspects of Purcell's career traced here.

Nationalism

The invocation of Orpheus by Hall and other authors of elegiac material for Purcell was an overt claim not just for the mythical proportions of Purcell's own musical

⁴⁰ Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era* (New York: Norton, 1947), pp. 203-18 (instrumental music: 213-4).

⁴¹ Cambridge: CUP, 1984.

⁴² Curtis Price, 'New Light on Purcell's Keyboard Music', in *Purcell Studies*, pp. 87-93.

⁴³ Adams, pp. 7-14, 26-37, 89-117 (for abbreviations see p. 9 above). Holman, pp. 60-101; Peter Holman, 'Consort Music', in *The Purcell Companion*, ed. by Michael Burden (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), pp. 254-98. Holman of course acknowledges the link (see Holman, pp. ix-x); I simply make the point that one study of the repertoire was made when the published literature could easily have supported two.

talent, but also that modern music in England had attained the same exalted heights to which it had risen in antiquity. This kind of pride in the national musical achievement was something that had not existed at the Restoration, when Britain seemed to have fallen behind the rest of Europe. During the eighteenth century, as Purcell's music gradually passed into the realm of 'ancient' music, it was transformed into a nostalgic remembrance, albeit not altogether accurate, of a time when England had its own 'national school' of musicians who were recognised throughout Europe for their talents. Such a situation must have seemed especially attractive in an age when the English stage was dominated by Italian opera (however enthusiastically the English embraced it), and even those genres that were recognisably native, like the anthem and the newly popular biblical oratorio, owed their continued existence to Handel.

Purcell's establishment of a successful vernacular music theatre was critical to his status as a national icon. After the debacle of Dryden's and Grabu's *Albion and Albanius*, which failed admittedly for more reasons than its composer's deficiency in the English language, it was left to Purcell to prove that music had a part to play on the late seventeenth-century stage in London.⁴⁴ This, of course, was a project that resulted in great success, as Dryden makes clear in his preface to *King Arthur*:

There is nothing better than what I intended, but the Musick; which has since arriv'd to a greater perfection in *England*, than ever formerly; especially passing through the artful hands of Mr. *Purcel*, who has Compos'd it with so great a Genius, that he has nothing to fear but an ignorant, ill-judging Audience.⁴⁵

Such a statement represented a marked reversal for Dryden, who had previously written of Grabu that the 'happiness of his genius' and skill 'raised [him] to a degree above any man who shall pretend to be his rival on our stage'.⁴⁶ *King Arthur* was, of course, one of the most important of the many stage works that contributed to Purcell's reputation as a vocal composer as documented above.

National pride in the achievement of Purcell also extended beyond specific instances of successful works into the realms of his musical genius in the abstract, which embraced both the 'purely musical' techniques and their application. The following poem by Tom Brown, for example, printed in the second book of *Harmonia Sacra*, touted Purcell's musical gifts above even those of the greatest contemporary

⁴⁴ For *Albion and Albanius* see Holman, p. 192, or (in more detail), Price, *Purcell and the London Stage*, pp. 265-70.

⁴⁵ John Dryden, 'Epistle Dedicatory', in *King Arthur* (London: J. Tonson, 1691); quoted in *PR*, p. 96.

⁴⁶ John Dryden, Preface to *Albion and Albanius* (London: J. Tonson, 1685).

Italian composers, before going on to combine the now familiar praise of his poetic settings with a delicious side-swipe at one of those poets who supplied the composer with his literary materials:

Not *Italy*, the Mother of each Art,
 Did e'er a Juster, Happier son impart.
 In thy Performance we with Wonder find
Bassani's Genius to *Corelli's* joyn'd.
 Sweetness combin'd with Majesty, prepares
 To raise Devotion with Inspiring Airs
 [...]
 This Tribute from each *British Muse* is due,
 Our whole Poetic Tribe's oblig'd to you.
 For where the Author's scanty Words have fail'd,
 Your happier Graces, *Purcell*, have prevail'd.
 And surely none but you with equal Ease
 Could add to *David*, and make *Durfey* please.⁴⁷

Despite his fame at home, Purcell never made a great impression on the wider European musical culture. There are several references in English literature to his alleged fame abroad, however, which should be examined if only for what they can tell us about the motivations of their writers. One of the *Orpheus Britannicus* poems, for example, includes the following lines:

Nor shall thy worth be to our isle confin'd,
 But fly and leave the lagging day behind.
 Rome that did once extend its arms so far,
 Y'ave conquer'd in a nobler art than war:
 To its proud sons but only earth was giv'n,
 But thou hast triumph'd both in earth and heav'n.⁴⁸

In this particular case the writer leaves it ambiguous whether Purcell's music actually reached Rome, or if he is merely asserting its primacy over that of Roman masters like Corelli. Either way, the more fundamental intention of the poet is to draw the analogy between the struggle of Catholicism and Protestantism, and the music of Italy and England.

Elsewhere the implication that Purcell's music travelled beyond the confines of the British Isles is made more explicit, as in the unidentified Mr Herbert's assertion: 'His fam'd *Te Deum*, all the world admires, / Perform'd in those renown'd Italian

⁴⁷ Tom Brown, *To His Unknown Friend, Mr. Henry Purcell* [...], in Henry Playford, *Harmonia Sacra* book II (London: Henry Playford, 1693), p. [c]; quoted in Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, pp. 336-37.

⁴⁸ 'R.G.', *On the Death of the Late Famous Mr. Henry Purcell* [...], in Henry Purcell, *Orpheus Britannicus* book II, 3rd edn (London: W. Pearson, 1721), p. i; quoted in Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. 346.

choirs'.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the fact remains that almost none of Purcell's music survives in continental sources, casting doubt on the accuracy of such reports. There is also a somewhat fantastical story, recounted by Cummings, that Corelli was so impressed by Purcell's music that he was on his way to meet the English master when he heard of his death (and hence promptly turned back for home!).⁵⁰ This is an appealing anecdote, though without verifiable contemporary origins it must be approached with caution, especially since another more reliable story portrays a Corelli who is far less complimentary. Joseph Addison, while in Rome, wrote to Congreve that 'Corelli has a very mean opinion of Harry Purcell's works as a gentleman told me that presented them to him'.⁵¹

For Burney, the explanation for the extremely limited success of Purcell's music in the rest of Europe lay in the very characteristic that made Purcell great in the eyes of the English:

Purcell was so truly a *national* composer, that his name was not likely to be wafted to the continent; and the narrow limits of his fame may be fairly ascribed, not only to the paucity and poverty of his compositions for instruments, for which the musical productions are an intelligible language to every country, but to his vocal compositions being solely adapted to English words, which rendered it unlikely for their influence to extend beyond the soil that produced them.⁵²

By Burney's time (and arguably even earlier) Italian opera had already assumed a quasi-international standard in the genre, with the effect that Purcell's stage works became marginalised as mere expressions of national, rather than artistically 'universal' values. We can add to this factor the range of genres in which he wrote, almost all of which (semi-opera, court ode, Anglican anthem and service music) were not only unique to English culture but strongly tied to specific social functions. The one body of works that did find limited circulation abroad was his keyboard music, selections from which appear in anthologies published in Paris and Amsterdam around 1700.⁵³ Since this repertoire occupied a similar role throughout Europe, it is no surprise that it was the only one in which Purcell's music managed to cross the

⁴⁹ Mr Herbert, *A Pindaric Ode on Dr Blow's Excellency in the Art of Music*, in Purcell, *Orpheus Britannicus* book II, 3rd edn (London: W. Pearson, 1721), p. vii; quoted in Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. 350.

⁵⁰ Cummings, *Purcell*, 89. Cummings states that the story is 'told in some of the biographies of Corelli'; I have found no reference to it elsewhere.

⁵¹ Joseph Addison to William Congreve, August 1699; *William Congreve, Letters and Documents*, ed. by John C. Hodges (London: Macmillan, 1964), 203; quoted in *PR*, p. 155.

⁵² Burney, II, 404.

⁵³ Zimmerman, *Catalogue*, pp. 497-8.

channel. Ironically, though, in terms of his reputation among Europeans these works could only have strengthened the convictions of those who imagined him as unremarkable in the context of wider European music.

Burney is of course the most explicit witness to Purcell's national importance in the later part of the eighteenth century. Despite his ever-critical ear for 'crudities' (which, incidentally, is far kinder to Purcell than to almost any of his contemporaries – Blow comes off particularly badly), Burney makes quite clear his perception of Purcell's place in the national imagination: he is 'as much the pride of an Englishman in Music, as Shakspeare in productions for the stage, Milton in epic poetry, Lock in Metaphysics, or Sir Isaac Newton in philosophy and mathematics'.⁵⁴ It becomes clear later in his account, however, that Purcell achieves this status for Burney not because of his achievements in music as a whole – we have already observed his disparaging attitude towards the sonatas – but because of his expression of English words. Although he acknowledges Handel to be 'superior in many particulars' to Purcell, he is of the opinion that 'in the accent, passion, and expression of English words, the vocal music of Purcell is, sometimes to my feelings, as superior to Handel's as an original poem to a translation'.⁵⁵ This sets Burney's praise of Purcell firmly in the context of the dominance of Italian opera (music in a foreign language) and Handel's oratorios (music in English set by a foreigner) in mid eighteenth-century London.

The promotion of Purcell as a national icon assumes even greater importance with the beginnings of modern scholarship in the late nineteenth century. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the activities of the Purcell Society, founded in 1876 'for the purpose of doing justice to the memory of HENRY PURCELL; firstly, by the publication of his works, most of which exist only in manuscript; and secondly, by meeting for the study and performance of his various compositions', in Cummings's words.⁵⁶ As is clear from Cummings's introduction to the activities of the society, it was the first of these aims that dominated the society's activities; indeed, the performance side seems to have lapsed early in its life.⁵⁷ From the tone that Cummings adopts it is almost as if the intervening years between himself and Burney had never passed, and of course in one sense the significance of the chronological

⁵⁴ Burney, II, 380.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

⁵⁶ PS 1, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Holland, *Purcell*, p. 240.

separation of the two is diminished anyway, since the number of Victorian reprints meant that Burney's *History* was still the foremost authority by Cummings's day. In this sense, the extended quotation from the *History* with which Cummings begins (incorporating the remarks about Milton, Locke and Newton quoted above) comes as no surprise.

The context that gave this element of nationalism its currency in 1878, however, was somewhat different to that in which Burney wrote a century before. Cummings writes that, 'While the national tongue has for more than a century and a half lavished praises upon Purcell, the national conscience has been uneasy at the bestowal of a barren honour and nothing more'.⁵⁸ While there had been attempts to publish collected editions of Purcell's music before, notably by Benjamin Goodison (whose 1788 proposal foundered when he received only around 100 subscribers) and Vincent Novello (who issued the complete sacred music, according to contemporary knowledge, between 1828 and 1832), none had succeeded in presenting anything approaching an authoritative collection of his works.⁵⁹ In the early 1800s this was nothing unusual, since no other composer had had such a collection issued either. The situation changed, however, in the 1850s, with the establishment of the *Bach-Gesellschaft*, its aim to present all of the works of Bach in just such a complete and authoritative edition. The importance of this endeavour in the growth of musicology as a discipline in Germany was huge, and the compilation of the original Bach edition was both formative of and testimony to the strength of the national musical identity from which it emerged. Perhaps even more important for English historians of music was Chrysander's complete edition of Handel's works, begun in 1859 under the auspices of the *Deutsche Händelgesellschaft*, which ultimately eclipsed all of the earlier English attempts at publishing his complete works (Arnold had published 32 volumes between 1787 and 1797; the Handel Society issued just 14, 1843-58), staking a strong national claim for the composer whom the English, rightly or wrongly, considered their own.⁶⁰ Though neither of these events are mentioned in Cummings's introduction to the Purcell Society's edition of Purcell's works, it is clear that the success of Germany in providing published monuments to its great composers,

⁵⁸ PS 1, p. 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁰ See Sidney Robinson Charles, and others, 'Editions, Historical', in *Grove Online*.

especially in the context of its dominance of contemporary music in Europe, could only strengthen the imperative that England too looked after its musical treasures (In the next century, the same could be said in Italy of Malipiero's edition of Monteverdi, begun in 1926, and in France of Prunières's Lully edition, begun in 1930). It was this concern that fuelled the committee's desire 'to enrich the available treasures of English art, and to wipe away a national reproach by doing justice to one of whom the nation has abundant reason to be proud'.⁶¹

The issue of a reliable edition of Purcell's works remained important for many years after the beginnings of the Purcell Society. Even some fifty years later, Holland could write that it was 'very little to the English credit that the Purcell Society edition is still far short of completion'.⁶² In the event, it would be another thirty years before the final volume appeared, some eighty-seven years after volume I and, bizarrely, a year later than the appearance of the first volume of the revised edition, which is still in progress today. The comparative disorganisation of this process is in stark contrast to the more efficient Bach and Handel editions, which were finished in 1899 and 1902 respectively.

Nevertheless, as Frank Howes has noted, the preparation of the edition was of great importance to what he describes as the 'English Musical Renaissance' of the twentieth century.⁶³ Among the musicians involved with the edition in various ways were composers like Bridge, Stainer, Parry, Stanford, Vaughan Williams and Tippett, though it would be hard to say whether their engagement with Purcell's music did more to benefit their own music or Purcell's reputation. Similarly, Imogen Holst's collection of essays to mark the tercentenary of Purcell's birth included essays by some of the most prominent figures in the revival of English music, including both Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, Tippett again, and the 'early music' specialist Robert Donington.⁶⁴ By furnishing an illustrious past for English music, Purcell lent an air of legitimacy to the large group of English composers and other musicians who

⁶¹ PS 1, p. 2.

⁶² Holland, *Purcell*, 236-7. See also the two similar complaints reprinted in Andrew Pincock, 'The Purcell Phenomenon', in *The Purcell Companion*, ed. by Michael Burden, pp. 3-17 (p. 9). The first, from William Barclay Squire writing in 1921, specifically draws the comparison with German musicology, while Vaughan Williams, in the second, laments the lack of publicly funded support for such activities in 1950s Britain.

⁶³ Frank Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), 91. See also Pincock, 'The Purcell Phenomenon', p. 11.

⁶⁴ *Henry Purcell, 1659-95: Essays on his Music*, ed. by Imogen Holst (Oxford: OUP, 1959).

found themselves, for the first time in two hundred years, in a position to rival the musical dominance of the German-speaking nations.

One of the causes of this element of nationalism in Purcellian scholarship is the domination of the field by British authors. A rough count of the authors of the most prominent studies of Purcell since Cummings's day reveals that some two thirds are British, and four fifths from English-speaking countries, emphasising once again the importance of Purcell's status as a vocal composer, and in particular his role in the setting of texts in the English vernacular. Indeed, it is interesting to note that American authors in particular have shared in much of the nationalist motivation and rhetoric of Purcellian literature. Franklin Zimmerman, for example, makes explicit the parallel between Purcell's day and the mid twentieth-century revival of English music, before going on to observe that

After nearly three centuries the challenge of Purcell's musical achievements has not lost its meaning in Purcell's own land. For other nations, and especially for those that have made the English language theirs, the challenge is also valid.⁶⁵

By contrast, Purcell has never featured prominently in European works of music history. Sébastien de Brossard's *Dictionnaire de musique* fails to mention Purcell at all, while Johann Mattheson's *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* simply credits him with the introduction of the Italian style to English instrumental music.⁶⁶ Despite Burney's statement to the contrary, Johann Gottfried Walther's *Musicalisches Lexicon* (1732) includes an entry on Purcell, though it is far from accurate: apparently unaware that there was more than one Purcell, Walther gives Daniel as his first name and lists a number of Daniel Purcell's works, but states that he is buried in Westminster Abbey, quoting Henry's memorial tablet.⁶⁷ Johann Adolph Scheibe's *Critischer Musikus* of

⁶⁵ Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. x.

⁶⁶ Sébastien de Brossard, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: [n. pub.], 1703; facs. Amsterdam: Antiqua, 1964); Johann Mattheson, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* (Hamburg: the author, 1713; facs. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1993), pp. 120-121.

⁶⁷ Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon* (Leipzig: W. Deer, 1732; facs. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1953), 'Pourcell'. Cf. Burney, II, 404: 'The diligent and candid Walther, by not having assigned to Purcell a niche in his Musical Dictionary, seems never to have heard of his existence'. The source of the confusion is Walther's spelling (and hence the displacement of the entry within the alphabetical sequence), apparently related to Mattheson's assertion that Purcell was French in volume 6 of the *Critica Musica* (Hamburg: [n. pub.], 1722; facs. Amsterdam: Knuf, 1964), pp. 148-9. For a more recent discussion of this point, see Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, pp. 375-6.

1745 has only a brief mention of Purcell in connection with national styles of recitative.⁶⁸

The situation is little improved later in the eighteenth century. Giovanni Battista Martini fails to mention Purcell at all in his *Storia della Musica*, while Ernst Ludwig Gerber simply repeats the opinions of Mattheson and Walther.⁶⁹ Gerber's later *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexicon* (1813-14) is at least rather more informed, though it relies heavily on the accounts of Hawkins and Burney.⁷⁰ A brief biography is supplemented by Dryden's ode on Purcell's death, and a list of printed sources of his works. Gerber then dwells on the 'Golden' sonata (Z. 820) and the Te Deum (Z. 232) as Purcell's best-known works.

Like Gerber, F. J. Fétis is content to repeat material drawn largely from the accounts of Hawkins and Burney in his *Biographie universelle des musiciens* from the middle of the nineteenth century.⁷¹ In a number of details, however, he betrays his ignorance of Purcell's music: while the rendering of 'The Gordian Knot Untied' (Z. 597) as 'Unlied' could be a typesetting error, the erroneous listing of Purcell's 1697 *Sonatas of Four Parts* as 'pour le clavecin' is a genuine blunder. Very likely Fétis had simply misread the title page of a printed copy he had seen, but the fact that he failed even to inspect its contents, which would have made clear his error, demonstrates his low estimation of Purcell. That such an important nineteenth-century work should treat Purcell so briefly (affording him only three pages in a seven-volume work), and with such little regard for accuracy, would in turn contribute to his continuing reputation on the continent. This is demonstrated quite clearly in the short article on Purcell in Hermann Mendel's *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexicon*, which

⁶⁸ Johann Adolph Scheibe, *Critischer Musikus* (Leipzig: [n. pub.], 1745; facs. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970), p. 739.

⁶⁹ G. B. Martini, *Storia della Musica*, 3 vols (Bologna: [n. pub.], 1757-81; facs. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1967); Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler (1790-1792) und Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler (1812-1814)*, ed. by Otto Wessely, 4 vols (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1966-77), I: *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* (orig. pub. Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1790-92), 'Purcell'.

⁷⁰ Gerber, *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler (1790-1792) und Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler (1812-1814)*, III: *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler*, vol. 2 (orig. pub. Leipzig: Kuhnle, 1814), pp. 775-6.

⁷¹ F. J. Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, 2nd edn, 10 vols (Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot Frères, 1860-80), VII, 141-3.

perpetuates the very same two errors observed in Fétis; clearly Mendel relied heavily on the French author for his own entry.⁷²

Even by 1878, Cummings was forced to resort to a work on keyboard music (Méréaux's *Les Clavecinistes de 1637 à 1790*) in order to support his rather optimistic observation that 'pages might be filled with eloquent tributes to [Purcell's] genius written by foreign pens'.⁷³ Purcell remained a peripheral figure in the European musical landscape towards the end of the nineteenth century, and those authors who did acknowledge him generally relied on second-hand and unreliable information. While it is true that the sheer number of works to mention Purcell seems at first to present a positive picture, the interdependence of these references betrays a remarkably narrow view of the composer, and when the same works later formed the foundations of early musicology in Europe, the discipline inherited its attitude towards Purcell as a peripheral figure, important only in the context of his English contemporaries. It has thus been in a spirit of exploration outside the central canon that most more recent European authors on Purcell have written, very often relying heavily once more on English works such as Westrup's *Purcell*.⁷⁴

England, of course, simply could not boast a substantial tradition of scholarly writing about music during the two centuries after Purcell's death: apart from (and perhaps as a result of) the success of Burney's *History* and, to a lesser extent, that of Hawkins, it was not until the late nineteenth century that serious research began to be undertaken into music in England. For this reason, it was not just Purcell himself who appeared peripheral in a European context, but also many of the English contributors to the burgeoning literature on Purcell around the turn of the last century. Indeed, this view of English musical scholarship survived well into the late twentieth century. Joseph Kerman, for example, describes British musicology before the Second World War as a 'small, largely amateur, and distinguished' tradition, and his attitude towards

⁷² Hermann Mendel, *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon*, 12 vols (Berlin: Oppenheim, 1870-83), VIII, 188-9.

⁷³ PS 1, p. 1. Jean Amédée Méreaux, *Les Clavecinistes de 1637 à 1790* (Paris: Heugel, 1867; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1969).

⁷⁴ See, for example, Suzanne Demarquez, *Purcell* (Paris: Éditions du Vieux Colombier, 1951) and Reinhold Sietz, *Henry Purcell: Zeit - Leben - Werk* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1955).

subsequent developments is little different: 'how slowly institutional support seems to be taking hold'; 'stubbornly ingrained patterns of amateurism continued'.⁷⁵

One consequence of the dominance of Purcellian studies by English academics has been their continuing concentration on Purcell's vocal output, engendered both by the close links between academic and ecclesiastical institutions in England, and the strong interest in English operatic and theatrical tradition surrounding the works of Benjamin Britten and Sir Michael Tippett. Similarly, the national character of much Purcellian scholarship has resulted in a largely antiquarian focus.⁷⁶ Particularly obvious in Hawkins and Burney, this interest is characterised by the belief that the object in question is primarily of interest because it is of 'ancient' provenance. Scholarship is therefore undertaken as a means of preserving and celebrating what is passed. Elsewhere, such an attitude can clearly be seen in the activities of such nineteenth-century societies as the Musical Antiquarian Society, the Purcell Club and even the Purcell Society itself, which sought primarily to 'do justice to [Purcell's] memory', rather than to proclaim his music as part of a living culture.⁷⁷ A.K. Holland was obviously particularly conscious of the effects of this attitude, writing in 1932 that:

With the possible exception of 'Dido and Aeneas', no works of his are ever given except in an atmosphere which suggests that the interest is one of curiosity, the museum-specimen view, and that the justification is mainly educational or historical.⁷⁸

This is a marked contrast to the German Romantic view of Bach, for example, as '*Urvater der Harmonie*', in Beethoven's words.⁷⁹ The gradual revival of Bach's works in the nineteenth century, for all that it was based on just as incomplete and historically conditioned an understanding of Bach's music as the English had of

⁷⁵ Kerman, *Musicology* (London: Fontana, 1985), pp. 26-7. Kerman's book was published in the US as *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

⁷⁶ For an entertaining, if eclectic account of the importance of antiquarianism in English culture see Peter Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* (London: Vintage, 2004), pp. 241-159.

⁷⁷ PS 1, p. 1. For a summary of the activities of these three societies, see Pinnock, 'The Purcell Phenomenon', pp. 10-12.

⁷⁸ Holland, *Purcell*, pp. 240.

⁷⁹ The quotation is from a letter written by Beethoven to the publisher and composer Franz Anton Hoffmeister in January 1801, in which he comments on Hoffmeister's plan to publish the collected works of J. S. Bach; quoted in Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *The Life of Beethoven*, ed. by Elliot Forbes, rev. edn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 268-69.

Purcell's, was predicated on a belief that Bach's music represented the beginning of a glorious living tradition, not simply a historical curiosity.

The influence of antiquarianism has also had an important effect on the portrayal of Purcell's musical character. Along with the view of Bach's place in German musical history described above came the idea that his music was somehow timeless, or at least that it transcended the artificial divisions of musical history. This is again quite different to the perceptions of Purcell's music propagated in English musical scholarship: historians like Burney and Hawkins were keenly aware of the vagaries of fashion that made Purcell's music seem dated and unviable for performance in their day. Burney suggested that Purcell had 'built his fame with such perishable materials, that his worth and works are daily diminishing', and we have already seen that in almost all respects, and despite his admiration of it, he considered Purcell's music to be very old-fashioned.⁸⁰ This should not, however, give extra credence to the notion that Purcell was a conservative composer by the standards of his own day; Burney, like North before him and whom he had read at length, was simply observing that Purcell's music seemed outdated in the light of what had followed him. Not until the mid-twentieth century, with Purcell's reinvention as a kind of 'Father of English Music', was his music understood as part of a living tradition, an understanding facilitated, conversely, by a greater understanding of the historical context in which he worked.

Perhaps the most important consequence of Purcell's nationalist reception, however, has been what we might call the sense of 'cultural responsibility' exhibited by almost all English writers on Purcell. We have already seen this clearly articulated by Cummings in his preface to the first volume of the Purcell Society's *Works of Henry Purcell*, but it carries much broader implications for Purcellian research in general. Another obvious example is the desire to align Purcell with a specifically English musical tradition, clearly articulated not only in the title of A. K. Holland's *Henry Purcell: The English Musical Tradition*, but also in the opening complaint of his first chapter. 'Until comparatively recent times, English musical history has been written almost exclusively from the angle of the great foreign schools', he writes, before going on to sketch out the previously little known seventeenth-century English

⁸⁰ Burney, II, 380.

tradition that Purcell had inherited.⁸¹ Recent manuscript studies of Purcell's copying activities have further contributed to the picture we have of a Purcell who was closely in touch with the English music of previous generations.⁸²

The same sense of 'cultural responsibility' can also be seen in the notable tendency of Purcell scholars to address their works 'to the general reader', thereby hoping to contribute to the knowledge of Purcell in the wider community.⁸³ Often this is accompanied by an 'evangelising' role, which can once again be understood in the light of Purcell's perceived position on the periphery position of the history of music and the discipline of musicology. Few are as explicit in this as Jack Westrup, whose continual comparisons of Purcell's music to examples by Bach and Handel, not to mention Haydn, Mozart and even Beethoven and Schubert, constitute an overt claim on behalf of Purcell for a more exalted place in the canon. The same motivation, however, lies behind the traditional view of Purcell's mature style (as derived from Burney) as that of the theatre music of the 1690s, which most resembled the familiar high Baroque style of Bach and Handel. The many writers on Purcell's sonatas who, like Hawkins, seek to excuse his ignorance of the Corellian style by asserting that he was influenced by earlier Italian composers (the subject of more detailed discussion below) further contribute to the same aim, as perhaps does the common attempt to furnish Purcell with the kind of unified stylistic progression that we recognise in the lives of other great composers such as Bach or Beethoven.⁸⁴ Such concerns have shaped the Purcellian literature ever since his own lifetime, at some times more explicitly, and at others more subtly and even unconsciously; by recognising them, however, we can go some way towards understanding what each work can really tell us about Purcell.

⁸¹ Holland, *Purcell*, p. 3.

⁸² Robert S. Shay, 'Henry Purcell and "Ancient" Music in Restoration England', (Ph.D., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1991). See also Robert S. Shay, 'Purcell as Collector of "Ancient" Music: Fitzwilliam MS 88', in Price (ed.), *Purcell Studies*, pp. 35-50; Robert Thompson, 'Purcell's Great Autographs', *ibid.*, pp. 6-34; *PM* (for abbreviations see p. 9 above).

⁸³ Westrup, p. xi; Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. ix; see also works of popular biography such as Jonathan Keates, *Purcell: A Biography* (London: Pimlico, 1996); Arthur Hutchings, *Purcell* (London: BBC, 1982).

⁸⁴ See p. 25 above.

PURCELL'S INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

If the notion of Purcell as *Orpheus Britannicus* understandably situated Purcell's greatest achievements in the realm of vocal music, that was not, paradoxically, for want of appreciation of the affective powers of instrumental music, which was understood in similar terms as was the vocal music that formed so central a part of Purcell's legacy. Thomas Mace, for example, recalled in 1676 the consort music of his youth in terms that make it quite clear that no text was needed in order to endow music with an expressive quality:

We had for our Grave *Musick*, *Fancies* of 3, 4, 5, and 6 *Parts* to the *Organ*; Interpos'd (now and then) with some *Pavins*, *Allmaines*, *Solemn*, and *Sweet Delightful Ayres*; all which were (as it where) so many *Pathetical Stories*, *Rhetorical*, and *Sublime Discourses*; *Subtil*, and *Accute Argumentations*; *So Suitable*, and *Agreeing to the Inward, Secret, and Intellectual Faculties of the Soul and Mind*; that to set Them forth according to their *True Praise*, *there are no Words Sufficient in Language*; yet what I can best speak of Them, shall be only to say, *That They have been to my self, (and many others) as Divine Raptures, Powerfully Captivating all our unruly Faculties, and Affections, (for the Time) and disposing us to Solidity, Gravity, and a Good Temper, making us capable of Heavenly, and Divine Influences.*⁸⁵

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, similar language was widely applied (for example by Roger North) to the sonatas of Corelli and, to a lesser extent, Purcell, making the recovery of contemporary understandings of the poetics of instrumental music an important aim in the study of this repertoire; this is the principal focus of Chapter 5. The following discussion of Purcell's fantasias and sonatas, meanwhile, is designed to serve a dual purpose: both introducing the works in terms of their general characteristics and source backgrounds, and surveying their subsequent reception in the light of the observations made thus far in the context of the broader history sketched above.

Although the evidence of the earliest manuscript sources suggests that Purcell's first trio sonatas may be almost directly contemporary with his fantasias and other consort music, in studies of Purcell's music it is almost always the fantasias that are discussed first.⁸⁶ For Purcell's contemporaries, however, it was above all the two sets of sonatas that represented Purcell's contribution to instrumental music; indeed, most seem not to have been aware of the existence of the fantasias at all. Even Roger

⁸⁵ Thomas Mace, *Musick's Monument* (London: the author, 1676), p. 234.

⁸⁶ On the dating of the chamber music see *PM*, p. 99 (discussed further below); the accounts of instrumental music in both Adams and Holman follow the standard pattern of discussing the fantasias first.

North, who learnt the viol from John Jenkins and, by his own account, had played chamber music (sonatas) with Purcell for recreation, appears not to have known them.⁸⁷ In his *Notes of Comparison between the Elder and Later Musick and Somewhat Historicall of Both* from around 1726, he writes

After M^r Jenkins I know but one poderose consort of that kind composed, which was M^r M. Lock's 4 parts, worthy to bring up the 'rere, after which wee are to expect no more of that style, especially considering how few before may be compared with it.⁸⁸

Since it was on the sonatas that nearly all commentators until the twentieth century based their judgements of Purcell's instrumental music, it is therefore to these works that I turn first, before moving on to consider how increasing awareness of the fantasias prompted Purcellian scholars to reconsider their views.

It is customary in discussions of Purcell's chamber music to spend some time establishing the historical background, both social and musical, to his work. For reasons of space and not a little disinclination to add yet further to the already formidable number of such discussions, however, I will refrain from doing so here and instead refer the reader to the accounts of Westrup and Holman.⁸⁹ Similarly, Franklin Zimmerman provides a useful survey of the very scant evidence concerning Purcell's immediate teachers; it will suffice to repeat that Purcell seems to have received formal instruction from Pelham Humfrey until the latter's death in 1675, when John Blow took over as his main teacher.⁹⁰ A less formal arrangement seems to have existed with Matthew Locke, the importance of which for Purcell's chamber music must have been considerable, and Zimmerman also suggests that the Purcells may have been close to Christopher Gibbons, son of Orlando.⁹¹

The sonatas and the 'reforme of musick all'Italliana'

It is all too easy to forget that Purcell first introduced himself to the musical public through a publication of instrumental music. While at the end of his life his vocal music may have seemed the most enduring part of his *œuvre*, for Purcell in

⁸⁷ North, pp. 21-3, 47.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

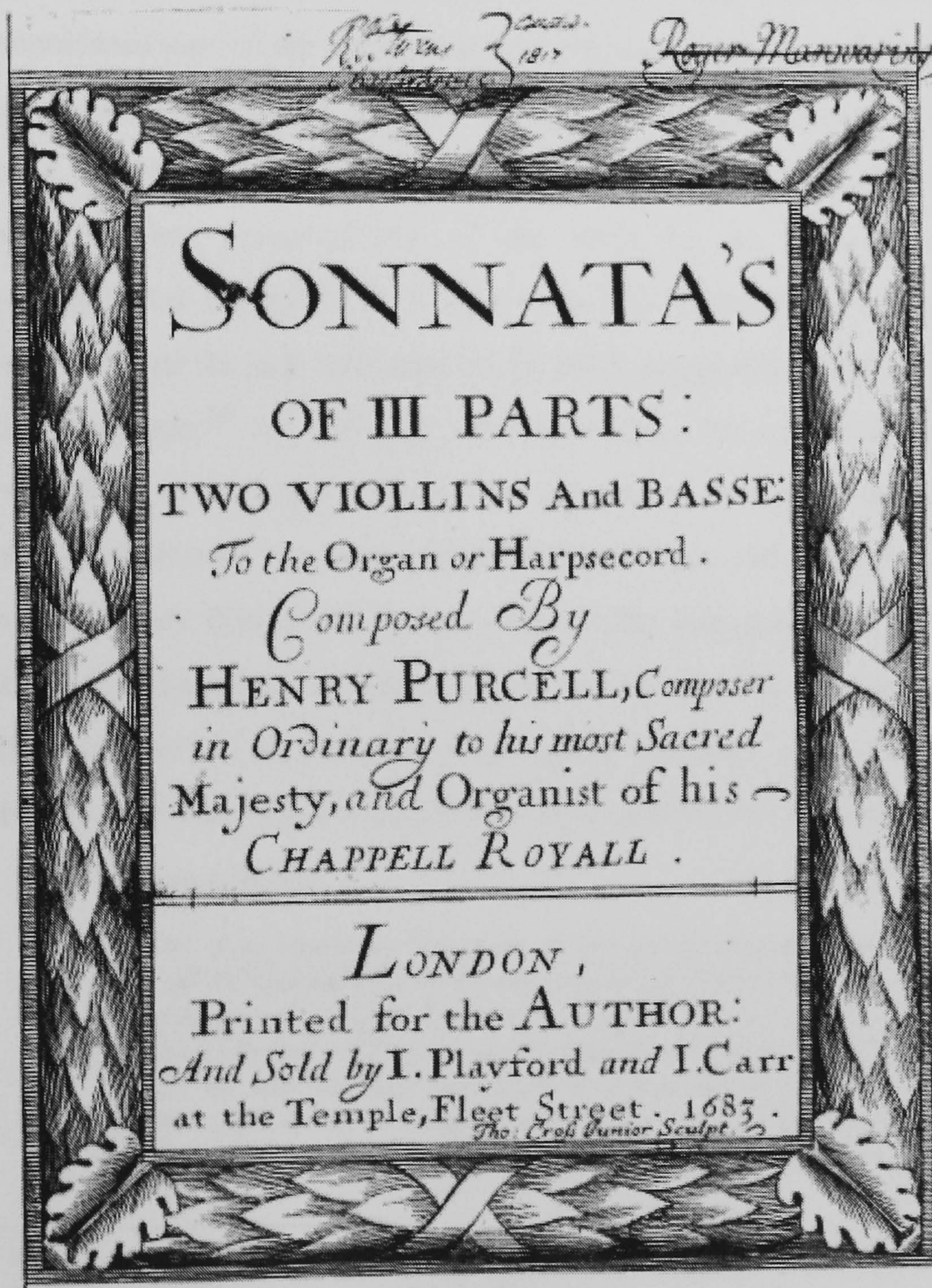
⁸⁹ Westrup, pp. 87-101, 222-33; Holman, pp. 1-22, 60-62. For a much more detailed account see the three relevant chapters in *The Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Ian Spink, The Blackwell History of Music in Britain, vol. 3 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993): Chapter 1, 'Music and Society', by Ian Spink (pp. 1-65); Chapter 6, 'Consort Music I: Up to 1660', by Christopher D. S. Field (pp. 197-244); Chapter 7, 'Consort Music II: From 1660', by Michael Tilmouth and Christopher D. S. Field (pp. 245-81).

⁹⁰ Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, pp. 34-43.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-7, 43-4.

1683 it was evidently his chamber music that best represented his compositional achievements, and a publication of Italianate trio sonatas was the ideal vehicle to demonstrate this in the context of the burgeoning fashion for Italian music in 1680s London. The 1683 *Sonnata's of III Parts* was the first publication Purcell had issued of any of his music, and the remarkably self-confident title page announces quite clearly the pretensions of a composer who had already made his mark upon the musical society of London (Fig. 1.1).⁹² The presentation of the volume in the latest engraved format added to the sense of prestige, and Purcell hinted further at his

Fig. 1.1. *Sonnata's of III Parts*, 1683: title page.⁹³



⁹² The *Sonnata's* are hereafter referred to simply as '1683'; for a full account of the appearance of the 1683 publication and its subsequent second and third impressions see PS(r) 5, pp. ix-xi, xv. (For abbreviations see p. 9 above).

⁹³ 1683, [n. p.].

success in the dedication to Charles II, asserting that the works contained within were '*the immediate Results of your Majesties Royall favour, and benignity to me (which have made me what I am)*'.⁹⁴ The celebrated portrait, at the front of the first violin part, of a periwigged Purcell in his twenty-fourth year, is framed with a classically inspired pediment complete with the Purcell family's coat of arms. Clearly this was a young man who intended to be taken seriously as one of the foremost composers in England.

Purcell was the first native English composer to write sonatas, unless one counts the few works of Henry Butler and William Young to use that name; both of these composers were, however, employed at foreign courts and therefore cannot be considered part of the mainstream developments in native English music.⁹⁵ Hawkins's assertion that '[John] Jenkins composed twelve Sonatas for two violins and a bass...printed at London about 1660, and at Amsterdam in 1664; and these werethe first compositions of the kind by an Englishman' has never been substantiated, though E. H. Meyer notes that instrumental works by 'Joan. Jenickens' were offered for sale in Frankfurt in 1667, suggesting that this may be the source of the confusion.⁹⁶ As Michael Tilmouth notes, the comparative novelty of the term 'sonata' is in any case indicated by the tone of contemporary references to Purcell's new publication ('the new musical compositions called SONATA'S lately published by Mr Henry Purcell').⁹⁷ It was this novelty that gave Purcell occasion to append a lengthy address to the beginning of the volume by way of an explanation of the characteristics of its contents. Although it is printed in almost every study of Purcell, its inclusion here will be justified by its importance to the later portions of this study.

Ingenuous Reader,

Instead of an elaborate harangue on the beauty and the charms of Musick (which after all the learned Encomions that words can contrive) commends itself best by the performances of a skilful hand, and an angelical voice:) [sic] I shall say but a very few things by way of Preface, concerning the following Book, and its Author: for its Author, he has faithfully endeavour'd a just imitation of the most fam'd Italian Masters; principally, to bring the seriousness and gravity of that sort of Musick into vogue, and reputation among our Country-men, whose humour, 'tis time now, should

⁹⁴ 1683, 'To the King' [n. p.].

⁹⁵ See Tilmouth/Field, 'Consort Music II', p. 260.

⁹⁶ Hawkins, II, 584; see also Burney, II, 322, repeating this assertion. Discussed in Tilmouth/Field, 'Consort Music II', p. 266; Ernst H. Meyer, *Early English Chamber Music: From the Middle Ages to Purcell* (as 'English Chamber Music', London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1946; rev. edn 1982), p. 247 (footnote 2).

⁹⁷ PS(r) 5, p. ix.

begin to loath the levity, and balladry of our neighbours: The attempt he confesses to be bold, and daring, there being Pens and Artists of more eminent abilities, much better qualify'd for the imployment than his, or himself, which he well hopes these weak endeavours, will in due time provoke, and enflame to a more accurate undertaking. He is not asham'd to his own unskilfulness in the Italian Language; but that's the unhappiness of his Education, which cannot justly be accounted his fault, however he thinks he may warrantably affirm, that he is not mistaken in the power of the Italian Notes, or the elegancy of their Compositions, which he would recommend to the English Artists. There has been neither care, nor industry wanting, as well in contriving, as revising the whole Work; which had been abroad in the world much sooner, but that he has now thought fit to cause the whole Thorough Bass to be Engraven, which was a thing quite besides his first Resolutions. It remains only that the English Practitioner be enform'd, that he will find a few terms of Art perhaps unusual to him, the chief of which are these following: Adagio and Grave, which import nothing but a very slow movement: Presto Largo, Poco Largo, or Largo by it self, a middle movement: Allegro, and Vivace, a very brisk, swift or fast movement: Piano, soft. The Author has no more to add, but his hearty wishes, that his Book may fall into no other hands but theirs who carry Musical Souls about them: for he is willing to flatter himself into a belief, that with such his labours will seem neither unpleasant, nor unprofitable.

Vale.⁹⁸

The implications of such a statement for the development of English musical culture match the lofty tone of the title page and portrait of Purcell included at the start of the volume. Taken at face value, it is nothing less than a manifesto for the wholesale adoption of the Italian sonata style, and no less vehement a criticism of the comparative superficiality of French instrumental music. On the other hand, the preface can equally be read as an instance of particularly wily self-promotion on the part of Purcell; despite its artistic pretensions, towards the end we are left in no doubt that this was also a commercial venture. Whatever its true motivation, however, it was this preface that gave rise to one of the most important recurring tropes of scholarly inquiry into the sonatas: the question of just who the 'most fam'd Italian Masters' were that Purcell purported to have 'justly imitated'. We have already encountered Hawkins's identification of this problem, and we will meet it again in connection with almost all of the more recent discussions of Purcell's music.

A second book of Purcell's sonatas was issued posthumously by his widow Frances Purcell in 1697, under the curious title *Ten Sonata's of Four Parts*. This time the dedication was to Lady Rhoda Cavendish, one time student of Purcell.⁹⁹ The edition replaces the elegant engraving of the 1683 set with old-fashioned moveable type, and much criticism has been directed at its editor (suggested by many to have

⁹⁸ 1683, preface [n. p.]; quoted in PS(r) 5, p. x. Westrup, p. 230 (footnote 1) suggests that this preface may have been written by John Playford, perhaps because it refers to Purcell in the third person.

⁹⁹ The dedication is reproduced in PS(r) 7, pp. x-xi.

been Daniel Purcell) for inattention to detail, which resulted in many errors and a 'haphazard' organisation of its contents.¹⁰⁰ These sonatas are, in fact, identical in instrumentation to the earlier examples, being composed for two violins and a bass instrument (labelled simply 'Bassus', but referred to in an advertisement of Playford as the *Bass-Viol*) that participates fully in the contrapuntal texture, together with a continuo that usually follows, but often departs from the bass part.¹⁰¹ Here, indeed, is another issue that has long occupied scholars in connection with Purcell's sonatas, and again its importance can be traced to the preface to the 1683 Sonatas (above). Although the confusion over the naming of the ensemble ('three' or 'four' parts) is generally accepted to result from an inconsistent application of the practice of describing an ensemble by the number of published part-books, the related issue of whether the continuo should slavishly follow the 'bassus' part (as it often does in the 1697 set) or present a simplified version, allowing the bass instrument melodic primacy (as Purcell seems to have intended in his supervision of the preparation of the continuo part for the 1683 set) has attracted considerable attention.¹⁰²

Aside from the issues of Italian influence and instrumentation, the most important factor in published discussions of the sonatas as a whole has been the determination of whether the two publications of Purcell's sonatas represent two distinct phases of his compositional style, or whether they were mainly drawn from one body of works dating from around the time of the publication of the first set. There has never been any doubt that the works belong to the same genre; each sonata uses the same three real parts (two trebles and bass), and in outward form suggests the Italian *sonata da chiesa* as an 'ideal type': four movements in the order Slow (Grave) – Fast (fugal; often labelled 'canzona') – Slow (triple time) – Fast (fugal, compound time).¹⁰³ In practice, of course, very few of Purcell's sonatas (and fewer Italian examples than the literature can lead one to believe) conform exactly to this succession of movements. Particularly common in Purcell's sonatas is the addition of a slow coda at the end (as in 1683 Sonata 4), or the alteration of the first movement to a fast movement (usually

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

¹⁰¹ See PS(r) 5, p. xi.

¹⁰² See Tilmouth's comments in *Ibid.*, pp. xi-vii, and PS(r) 7, p. xi. Thurston Dart discusses the same issue in more detail in 'Purcell's Chamber Music', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 85 (1958-9), 81-93 (pp. 82-87).

¹⁰³ See William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, 4th edn (New York: Norton, 1983), p. 306; Westrup, pp. 231-32.

resulting in a slow second movement, as in 1683 Sonata 10), but if one were to list all the variants the impression gained would be that each sonata begins afresh with no preconceptions as to form. The notion of the S-F-S-F 'ideal type' is therefore a convenient way of expressing the two general principles that do hold in all of these works: that the opening movement is most often slow, and that the successive movements tend to proceed by contrast of tempo.

The possibility of observing stylistic differences between the two sets was widely explored in the early years of modern Purcellian research, shaped by the notion that the 1697 sonatas exemplified Purcell's mature, Italianate style of the 1690s whereas the 1683 set was more representative of his youthful interest in arcane contrapuntal procedure.¹⁰⁴ In fact, the situation is much more complicated than this, since more recent manuscript studies have suggested that most, and perhaps even all of the twenty-two sonatas were composed in the early 1680s. The autograph copies of the 1683 Sonatas are unfortunately lost; perhaps, having closely supervised the preparation of their publication, Purcell considered this to be the definitive version and consequently was not concerned to preserve the manuscripts. Most of the sonatas from the 1697 set, however, do survive in autograph, in Purcell's score-book now known as London, British Library Add. MS 30930.¹⁰⁵ In the latest studies of this manuscript, Robert Thompson and Robert Shay have shown that its versions of 1697 Sonatas 1-3 are most likely to have been copied before 1683.¹⁰⁶ The next group of sonatas to appear in the manuscript comprises 1697 Sonatas 9, 7 and 8 in that order, in a hand that suggests a later date of copying.¹⁰⁷ Although Tilmouth suggests that these might have been later works, Thompson shows in connection with a slip of paper used to insert a correction that 1697 Sonata 8, at least, must have been composed at a similar date to the earlier three sonatas.¹⁰⁸ Two further sonatas, 1697 nos. 10 and 4, appear in the manuscript (the latter incomplete, due to the removal of a number of pages at some time in the manuscript's history), and appear to have been copied still later. Given that sonata 8 existed earlier, however, it is quite possible that these works

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Holland, *Purcell*, pp. 146-47; Westrup, pp. 234-35.

¹⁰⁵ Henceforth Lbl Add. 30930 (see p. 9 above). For a full description of the manuscript, its contents and concordances, see *PM*, pp. 84-125.

¹⁰⁶ *PM*, p. 97; Thompson, 'Purcell's Great Autographs', p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ *PM*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁸ PS(r) 7, p. x; Thompson, 'Purcell's Great Autographs', p. 15.

too existed in another manuscript, now lost, prior to being entered into Lbl Add. 30930. This leaves only 1697 Sonatas 5 and 6, both of which are known only in the published versions and later, manuscript copies of them. While the evidence is therefore inconclusive, there are good reasons to suggest that almost all of the sonatas were composed in the period c. 1680-85, and this would accord well with Frances Purcell's description of the sonatas of the 1697 set 'having already found many friends among the Judicious part of Mankind', which suggests that they had already been circulated in manuscript for some time before their publication.¹⁰⁹

During the early eighteenth century, the sonatas continued to circulate both in the published editions and in manuscript copies, both derived from the earlier manuscript sources and from the published texts.¹¹⁰ Patterns of copying suggest that Purcell's sonatas were gradually overshadowed by Italian works, particularly those of Corelli, as Roger North attests:

Then came over Corelly's first consort that cleared the ground of all other sorts of musick whatsoever. By degrees the rest of his consorts, and at last the conciertos came, all of which are to the musitians like the bread of life. And to name the rest of the forrein consorts of the Itallian style, that by means of Mons^r Estienne Rogers in Holland and other printers in England, came more or less into vogue, would be of small importance to this designe.¹¹¹

An important exception to this process, however, was that of the so-called 'Golden' sonata, 1697 Sonata 9, which seems to have acquired a degree of popularity quite beyond that of the other twenty-one sonatas. This sonata was first published independently by John Walsh in a 'Carefully corected [*sic*]' edition of 1704, and appears in numerous subsequent editions and manuscript copies.¹¹² The reasons for its popularity, and the source of the nickname 'Golden' which it had acquired certainly by Walsh's 1704 publication, are mysterious, but the fact that this one sonata was disseminated so widely had important implications for the subsequent reception of Purcell's instrumental music. Its enduring reputation prompted Hawkins to print it in full as an example of Purcell's sonata style so that his readers could judge whether or not they agreed with Thomas Tudway's opinion that it 'equals if not exceeds any of Corelli's sonatas'.¹¹³ Its presence in Hawkins's account further ensured continuity

¹⁰⁹ PS(r) 7, p. x.

¹¹⁰ PM, pp. 87, 111, 113-8, 124-5.

¹¹¹ North, pp. 310-11.

¹¹² See PS(r) 7, pp. xix-xxiii; PM, pp. 118-124.

¹¹³ Quoted in Hawkins, II, 755-9. The letter from which Hawkins quotes is no longer extant.

with the nineteenth century, with the result that the sonatas were some of the first works to be included in the Purcell Society's edition of his works.¹¹⁴

Hawkins's account of Purcell's instrumental music also provided the methodological impetus for much commentary on Purcell's sonatas, since it was he who first articulated the basic problem of identifying just 'who those famed Italian masters were whom he professes to have imitated'.¹¹⁵ Before examining in detail the ways in which this question has been answered, and its consequent shaping of the literature on Purcell's sonatas, it is worth considering briefly why it was that Hawkins and other commentators up to the middle of the twentieth century placed such a premium on the Italianate qualities of these works.

From a late eighteenth-century standpoint, Purcell's role in musical history was undoubtedly one of renewal:

Music was manifestly on the decline, in England, during the seventeenth century, till it was revived and invigorated by Purcell, whose genius, though less cultivated and polished, was equal to that of the greatest masters on the continent.¹¹⁶

What this seems to have meant with respect to instrumental music was that Purcell played a large part in the establishment of the late eighteenth-century status quo: the apparent modernity of certain aspects of Purcell's style, coupled with Italophile rhetoric such as that from Roger North quoted above, seemed so clearly to anticipate the strengths of Corelli's and Handel's music as they were understood by this time, that they could be pointed to as the beginnings of musical modernity as contrasted with the 'barbarities' of earlier generations.

Inevitably, the strength of this argument rested as much on political grounds as it did on stylistic observations: perhaps even more important than the few stylistic observations made by Burney and Hawkins was the fact that these could conveniently be attributed to the fate of music during the mid-century 'troubles', or more accurately to the musical and political events set in motion after the Restoration in 1659. Just as the late eighteenth-century constitutional monarchy could trace its roots to the re-establishment of monarchy, and perhaps ultimately to the Glorious Revolution of 1688, so the beginnings of the great flowering of eighteenth-century instrumental music could be detected in the music of Purcell during the 1680s.

¹¹⁴ PS 5 (1893) and 6 (1896); full refs in bibliography.

¹¹⁵ Hawkins, II, 755; see p. 23 above.

¹¹⁶ Burney, II, 404.

Hawkins in particular was vehement in his assertion of Puritan suppression:

The forbidding the use [of music] in the liturgy, and the restraints on the stage, amounted in effect, to a proscription of music from the metropolis, and drove the professors of it to seek protection where they were most likely to find it. It will be easily conceived, that the prohibition of cathedral service left a great number of musicians, as mainly, organists, minor canons, lay-clerks, and other persons attendant on choirs, without employment; and the gloomy and sullen temper of the times, together with the frequent hostilities that were carried on in different parts of the kingdom, during the usurpation, had driven music to a great degree out of private families.¹¹⁷

Hawkins might well be criticised today for over-emphasising the effects of the Interregnum on music, though even he notes that musical life in Oxford at least continued to thrive, inserting an extended account of William Ellis's musical meetings as described by Anthony Wood.¹¹⁸ Burney, however, although he does not hesitate to criticise the fate of music in liturgical and theatrical circles, is at pains to point out that the Interregnum was not universally bad for music. As we have seen, he was well acquainted with the writings of Roger North, who had wittily observed that chamber music in particular had flourished during the civil war, since 'many chose rather to fiddle at home, than to goe out, and be knockt on the head abroad'.¹¹⁹ Burney in turn backed up a similar observation by referring to the printed music of the time: '[music] seems to have been more zealously cultivated, in private, during the usurpation, if we may judge by the number of publications, than in the same number of years, at any former period'.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, Burney was far more concerned with public genres like sacred and dramatic music. He also harboured an intense dislike of the consort music of pre-Restoration times:

With respect to the instrumental productions under the title of *Fancies, &c.* as they were chiefly composed for lutes and viols, which are now laid aside, if they had been replete with genius and learning, justice could not have been done to them in the performance. Luckily the chief part of them are of so artless and insipid a kind, that no loss would accrue to judicious and reasonable lovers of Music by their utter annihilation.¹²¹

With this in mind, it is little surprise that Burney's recognition of the widespread private practice of music during the Interregnum failed to extend to a full account of

¹¹⁷ Hawkins, II, 679.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 680-83. On Anthony Wood see Bruce Bellingham, 'The Musical Circle of Anthony Wood in Oxford during the Commonwealth and Restoration', *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, 19 (1982), 7-70.

¹¹⁹ North, p. 294.

¹²⁰ Burney, II, 321.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

this important aspect of the history of English instrumental music. In turn, the strong influence of Burney and Hawkins on the early Purcellian literature meant that the 'usurpation' inevitably formed an important context to Purcell's life in succeeding studies. The continuing concentration on Purcell's vocal music further meant that Burney's comments about instrumental music could be safely ignored, and the musical landscape into which Purcell emerged portrayed as almost entirely desolate.

Cummings's *Purcell* furnishes a classic example of how Purcell came to be understood as English musical redeemer, in the context of a reading of Burney and Hawkins that apparently ignored their efforts to show that music had not, in fact, been universally suppressed during the Interregnum. Having noted the 'high state of cultivation' of music in Elizabethan times, Cummings informs us that 'with the establishment of the Commonwealth all music, both of church and theatre, was rigidly suppressed'.¹²² After recounting 'with horror and indignation' the destruction of organs and other apparatus of musical liturgy, he sets the scene for the appearance of Purcell:

From the preceding slight and brief sketch of the state of music during the Commonwealth, it will be evident that the Puritan rule was most unpropitious for the art; with its professors banned, and its public performance well-nigh extinguished, music might perhaps have been expected to have died an unnatural death; but heaven-born, it retained a vital spark which needed only the breath of freedom and gentle encouragement to foster it into a flame.¹²³

And when Purcell arrives in Cummings's narrative, it is with a literary pomp to rival in musical scholarship the splendour of Charles II's eventual return to London in 1660:

With the death of Cromwell, the sun of the Puritan world vanished, but happily at the same time a new star in the musical firmament arose. Cromwell died in 1658, at Whitehall, and in the same year, within a bow-shot of the Palace, was born the favoured child of the muses, destined to raise the musical fame of England to a height it had never before attained, and by his beautiful creations to make for himself a name of undying fame.¹²⁴

No other work on Purcell expresses this sequence of events in quite the same terms, but the influence of such a narrative can be felt throughout the subsequent literature of the twentieth century. The fate of music under the Protectorate, though it is by no means as prominent, appears in the biographies of A. K. Holland and J. A.

¹²² Cummings, *Purcell*, p. 1.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7. Purcell was actually born in 1659; see Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, pp. 4-5.

Westrup as part of the intellectual common currency of the time, giving rise to the frequent references to the 'Puritan hostility to church music' and the like. It is a function of the historical position of Purcell that his biographies almost always describe a process of musical renewal, and that this renewal is principally associated with the composer himself. This is the case even when, as with Holland and Westrup and in more recent studies like Peter Holman's *Purcell*, there is no particular stress on the supposed 'suppression' of music under the Cromwellian regime.

The kind of rhetoric employed by Cummings is not quite dead even in the more recent studies of Purcell. It is particularly influential in Jonathan Keates's *Purcell: A Biography*, in which the author begins with a lengthy prologue entitled 'The Unfriendly Time'. Keates's work illustrates the extent to which less fashionable scholarly views can still hold sway in the genre of popular biography. Despite a far more balanced view of the musical effects of the Interregnum than we saw in Cummings's work, the underlying message remains:

During these years of ending and beginning again, the greatest of all English musicians was born. We cannot grasp the significance of Henry Purcell's achievement without relating it to the unique historical perspective of music in England during an age when to many thoughtful observers the threads of cultural continuity seemed, superficially at least, in danger of breaking.¹²⁵

Keates's references to the enthusiasm of figures like Benjamin Britten and Michael Tippett for Purcell's music further suggest some of the attraction of viewing Purcell as something of a 'redeemer' of English music, not just in the seventeenth century, but (at least in a figurative sense) in the context of the twentieth-century 'English Musical Renaissance' as well.

There is, of course, nothing intrinsically wrong with a view of Purcell's place in history as one of reviver of an almost lost tradition. In the present context, however, its particular interest is the way it tends to promote a particular understanding of his music; namely, the notion of a gradual progress towards an Italianate mature style that would foreshadow the High Baroque idiom of Bach and Handel. In the context of such a general view, derived in large measure from Burney and most fully presented by Westrup, Purcell's apparent adoption of the Italian sonata style in 1683 is obviously of paramount importance. Early commentators on Purcell's sonatas were quite clear about Purcell's motivation in this trend. Having inherited a backward and

¹²⁵ Keates, *Purcell*, p. 11.

isolated tradition, starved of creative links with the continent, he sought to revive English instrumental music not by looking inward, back to his English predecessors, but by striving towards a modern harmonic idiom, as developed in the sonatas of Bassani and Corelli.

One logical problem with this sequence of events we have already encountered: as Burney admitted, the Interregnum was in fact a productive time for consort music, which was arguably the one genre that was not in urgent need of revival when Charles II came to power in 1660. In fact, it was the Restoration itself that posed a greater threat to musical continuity in the genres of instrumental music. The re-employment of many musicians in ecclesiastical, court and theatre contexts meant that few had the time to devote to consort music on the same scale. More importantly, Charles set about reorganising the court musical establishment such that it could provide entertainment in the French style that was so popular among those courtiers who had recently returned from exile. Thomas Tudway describes him as a 'brisk and Airy prince', who came to the crown 'in the Flow'r, & vigour of his Age' and soon 'tyr'd with the Grave and Solemn way'; North further informs us that the King had an 'utter detestation of fancys', a sentiment that could not have encouraged the continued cultivation of the fantasia for viols at court.¹²⁶ The King set about replacing the old consorts with ensembles from his Twenty-Four Violins, and the contrapuntal tradition was gradually supplanted by continuo textures that largely confined musical interest to the outer parts.¹²⁷ Such was the style criticised by conservatives like Thomas Mace, who had experienced both the flowering of the older style of consort music surrounding Charles I's court, and the introduction of the new French style under his son. Mace is particularly critical of the unequal balance between parts in the new style, and makes no effort to conceal his scorn for the 'Scaulding violin'.¹²⁸ This is anything but a balanced assessment of the state of music in the 1670s, but Mace's partisan stance does not undermine the strength of his underlying observation about the important changes that had taken place: 'It can be no good fashion in Musick', he

¹²⁶ Thomas Tudway, *Services and Anthems*, (6 vols, 1715-20; London, British Library, Harleian MSS 7337-42), II, preface; quoted in Ian Spink, *Restoration Cathedral Music 1660-1714* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), pp. 436-7. North, p. 350.

¹²⁷ See Peter Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court, 1540-1690* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 267-326 *passim*.

¹²⁸ Mace, *Musick's Monument*, p. 233.

writes, 'to bring up any Way, Thing, or Instrument, and Cry it up for the Mode, and leave a Better, and Cry it Down'.¹²⁹

As a possible background for Purcell's comments (in the preface to his 1683 sonatas) about his emulation of the 'seriousness and gravity' of the Italian style, this is far more convincing than the general allusion to the supposed 'musical drought' of the Commonwealth period. In particular, it offers the beginnings of an explanation of why Purcell's 'revival', if we wish to continue to view it in this light, of English chamber music took on the explicit allusions to other national styles at all, rather than simply seeking to revive the old English way. Charles II's French tastes may have brought English music more up-to-date, but for a musician like Purcell, reared to study and revere the music of the generations of Elizabethan and Jacobean composers, this did nothing to restore the intellectual virtuosity of English chamber music's glorious past. The example of Purcell's own fantasias shows that, no matter how good the works, music for traditional consorts could not find a place in the new musical establishment. Purcell was forced, ultimately, to look to the developments in Italy to see how the 'great deal of Art mixed with good Air' that he so valued could be achieved using modern violins and continuo groupings.¹³⁰

In spite of this more complex historiography, however, most commentary on the sonatas until the middle of the twentieth century continued to grapple with the question raised by Hawkins as to the specific influences on Purcell's style, in line with the reasoning outlined above that suggested that the sonatas' adoption of Italianate idioms (and hence their status as 'modern' works) was their most important characteristic. That this point of debate assumed such prominence reflects a notable feature of much work on Purcell: although at any one time there has usually been a general consensus about the fundamental traits of his music, there is rarely a large amount of material from which specific conclusions can be drawn. The idea that Purcell's music gradually took on more and more Italianate characteristics was certainly evident, as we have seen, in the works of Hawkins and Burney; indeed, it dates back even further, to Purcell's contemporaries. Roger North's oft-quoted line concerning 'the Orfeus Britannicus Mr H. Purcell, who unhappily began to shew his great skill before the reforme of musick *all'Italliana*, and while he was warm in the

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

¹³⁰ *AD*, p. 125. (For abbreviations see p. 9 above)

persuit of it, dyed' essentially articulates the same premise.¹³¹ When it comes to identifying the possible influences on Purcell's sonata style, however, commentators have been forced to rely on the scant source material, mixed with not a little guesswork.

The first twentieth-century commentator to have taken up this issue seems to have been Frank Bridge.¹³² In his 1915 paper, he championed the cause of Nicola Matteis, whose name he had presumably encountered in Burney's *History* before following the trail back to its source in the description of Matteis's importance in North's *Memoires of Musick*.¹³³ In the ensuing discussion, Hubert Parry reiterated Fuller-Maitland's speculation, from the preface to the Purcell Society's 1893 edition of the *Sonatas of Three Parts*, that the principal influence was G. B. Vitali, and called attention as well to 'G. B. Bononcini, whose Opus No. 1 came out in 1665 [*recte* G. M. Bononcini, Op. 1 Venice 1666]' and G. B. Bassani.¹³⁴ Some two years later, William Barclay Squire took up the debate in a letter to the *Musical Times* drawing attention to Purcell's quotation of a sonata by 'Lelio Calista' in 'The Art of Descant'.¹³⁵ Lelio Colista (1629-80) was virtually unknown in 1917, and Barclay Squire assembled a selection of historical references to him and noted the similarity of some sonatas attributed to him in the Bodleian Library to those of Purcell. Apart from the suggestion of Colista as a possible influence on Purcell, Barclay Squire's letter is most important for its introduction of Purcell's theoretical treatise to the debate surrounding Purcell's chamber music.

Little more was added to this debate until Michael Tilmouth came to consider the evidence afresh in 1959.¹³⁶ Tilmouth reviewed the previous suggestions, adding the name of Maurizio Cazzati to the list of Italian sonata composers and further suggesting that Purcell may have been influenced by Frescobaldi's keyboard works.¹³⁷ In presenting the Italian influence on Purcell as that of a body of well-known works

¹³¹ North, p. 307. As Westrup notes (p. 241) this is indeed a 'rather muddled sentence', but the intended meaning (which, unfortunately, Westrup does little to clarify) is apparently that Purcell was 'warm in the pursuit' of the Italian style, and would have mastered it had he not died so young.

¹³² Bridge, 'Purcell's Fantazias and Sonatas', pp. 1-13; see p. 58 above.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-7; compare Burney, II, 406-10 with North, p. 355-8.

¹³⁴ Bridge, 'Purcell's Fantazias and Sonatas', p. 11. For biographical details of the composers listed in this paragraph see *Grove Online*.

¹³⁵ W. Barclay Squire, 'Purcell and Italian Music', *MT*, 58 (1917), 157. The quotation from 'Calista' is in *AD*, p. 124.

¹³⁶ Tilmouth, pp. 112-3. (For abbreviations see p. 9 above)

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-3.

by famous composers whose works reached England during the 1670s, Tilmouth managed to leave behind the ultimately futile attempts of earlier commentators to pin down the exact names of the Italian masters whom Purcell professed to have imitated. For the first time, he also ventured a few comparisons between the techniques of these composers and Purcell's own practice, most notably in the overall form of the sonata, the use of thematic resemblances and *da capo* structures, and the importance of invertible counterpoint to Purcell's sonata style. It was now possible to observe not only that Purcell probably knew certain Italian sonatas, but also that his works demonstrated particular aspects of the Italian sonata style.

A closer examination of Tilmouth's analytical approach to the sonatas will be a useful starting point when I come to outline my own analytical approach in the following chapters. For the moment, however, it will be sufficient to note that, despite his less pedantic approach to the question of specific influences and the broader musical insight of his article, Tilmouth's observations essentially served the same ends as the discussions of Bridge, Parry and Barclay Squire by presenting Purcell's sonatas as modern in that they adopted features that were recognisably indebted to the Italian sonata (though elsewhere in his article he does draw attention to the influence of Purcell's fantasia style). None of these early studies interrogates the underlying premise, that this Italianate modernity was indeed the most important feature of Purcell's sonatas. In the context of the nationalist understanding of Purcell's music discussed above, however, this should be hardly surprising: it represents another instance of the promotion of Purcell as a master (and by extension, the very reputation of England as a musical nation) by demonstrating his affinity with and indebtedness to the most important developments in the continental mainstream.

The fantasias and Purcell's 'conservatism'

If the insistence on Purcell's modernity and the search for its sources merely seems hackneyed in connection with his sonatas, it has the potential to become seriously problematic when applied in the context of his fantasias. Ernst H. Meyer's discussion of Purcell's fantasias in *Early English Chamber Music* furnishes a somewhat extreme example of what can happen when such widely-accepted views come into contact with particular ideological interpretations of musical history:

Purcell's instrumental works, even his earliest, breathe the new spirit, too. There is nothing left of the awkwardness and violence that sometimes occurred in Locke's works, or of the hyper-contrapuntal intellectualism which we noticed in Thomas Ford's fantasias and in at least some of William Lawes' works. Purcell took over from his predecessors all that was bright, colourful, tuneful, and passionate. There is an intensity of sentiment, a sense of dramatic power, and at the same time a sensual tenderness such as we have never met before. We feel that something new has happened to English music.

The last traces of medieval scholasticism, still apparent in many of the compositions of his immediate forerunners, have vanished. An astonishing freedom of expression prevails. Startling suspensions, insistent accents, chromatic passages with audacious harmonisation abound in Purcell's fantasias and sonatas.¹³⁸

The self-assurance of his assertions masks the fact that Meyer offers no support at all for this view of Purcell, implying, in his reluctance to repeat the detail of others' observations, that it is simply a commonplace of Purcellian scholarship.¹³⁹ As we have seen, this is supported by one branch of inquiry into Purcell's sonatas, but the fact remains that much other work has emphasised Purcell's indebtedness to older English music. It becomes clear in the course of his account that Meyer's representation of Purcell is heavily conditioned by his desire to draw an intimate connection between the rise and fall of English chamber music and the emergence of the merchant classes in the course of the seventeenth century. 'Instrumental chamber music was the music of the rising merchants and the progressive sections of the aristocracy as they were fighting their way through progress and set-backs, to final victory', he writes, making Purcell's place in this narrative quite clear:

Purcell has had at least as much influence on the development of the mind and character of the British people as had many a general, statesman, or philosopher. He belongs to the people [...] He used melodies of a type known and understood by common men. In his passionate harmonies, which were so new in his time, he expressed their hopes, struggles and desires. Thus in his works he gave back to the people an even greater wealth and beauty than he had drawn from them.¹⁴⁰

According to Meyer's Marxist narrative, the 'hyper-contrapuntal intellectualism' of some composers' chamber music was inextricably linked to the despotism of early Stuart absolute rule; the similar contrapuntal richness of Purcell's fantasias had therefore to be suppressed for Meyer to acknowledge their greatness. Similarly, the construction of Purcell as the importer of foreign styles suited Meyer's conception of

¹³⁸ Meyer, *Early English Chamber Music*, p. 276.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 280, 277.

the ultimate eclipse of the consort tradition: 'the [previously] healthy influx of foreign styles into English music became an invasion'.¹⁴¹

Although this is an extreme example, it illustrates nicely a common feature of Purcellian scholarship, namely the potential for impressive edifices to be built on distinctly weak foundations. Meyer's ideological background causes him to present these ideas with a particular slant, but the essential observations that he makes regarding Purcell's modernity and indebtedness to Italian styles, and the under-representation of his links with the old consort tradition, were all common in the scholarship of the first half of the twentieth century. Not until later on, prompted perhaps by Tilmouth's brief example, did scholars begin to explore in detail the possibility that Purcell's sonata style was as much indebted to his mastery of the English contrapuntal style as it was to his understanding of contemporary Italian techniques.

One reason for this reticence concerning the fantasias and their importance to Purcell's stylistic development was no doubt their comparative unfamiliarity: in stark contrast to the sonatas, which had remained accessible throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries thanks in part to Hawkins's reference to them, and furthermore to the fact that they survived in printed copies, Purcell's fantasias, In nomines and related pieces remained comparatively obscure even at the turn of the twentieth century. Cummings, for example, seems to have been unaware of them, or at least considered them so unimportant that the terms 'Purcell's purely instrumental music' and 'Purcell's sonatas' could be equated without comment:

And when we look at Purcell's purely instrumental music, his sonatas, we find that as music they are superior to Corelli – containing more learning, more ingenuity, and yet without any appearance of labour or restraint; but Corelli was a violinist, and in that respect he had the advantage over Purcell, and knew what passages were best adapted for the instruments for which he wrote.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

¹⁴² Cummings, *Purcell*, p. 93. Somewhat later Marc Pincherle would repeat the latter part of this observation rather more venomously in *Corelli et son Temps* (Paris: Editions le Bon Plaisir, 1954). In the English translation published two years later: 'One is surprised, when reading these sonatas, that a musician such as Purcell should have reaped so little profit from his model [Pincherle assumes Purcell knew Corelli's op.1], and continued to use an archaic and gauche style of violin writing to the point of obscuring in part the sonatas' science and expressive beauty'. Marc Pincherle, *Corelli: His Life, His Work*, trans. by Hubert E. M. Russell (New York: Norton, 1956), p. 158.

Cummings's ignorance of the fantasias is particularly surprising since the unique source of most of the consort music is the same manuscript, Lbl Add. 30930, which contains the surviving autograph sonatas; at the very least, therefore, the previous owners of this manuscript, like Joseph Warren, must have known of their existence.¹⁴³

Nevertheless, the fantasias' first appearance in the Purcellian literature appears to have been in an article of 1916 by Sir J. Frederick (Frank) Bridge, who also would appear to be the first person in modern times to have been interested in their performance:

I do not think it is widely known that Purcell followed the prevalent custom and set to work to compose Fancies before he took the remarkable step of writing his *First Set of Sonatas* for Two Violins and Bass. I do not think these Fancies have ever been published, but I have had most of them played at various times.¹⁴⁴

Following this reference, the fantasias received their first publication in the edition of 1927 by Peter Warlock and André Mangeot.¹⁴⁵ Not until 1959, however, would Thurston Dart edit these and the remaining instrumental works for the Purcell Society, making Warlock's the only English edition of Purcell's fantasias for thirty years.¹⁴⁶ This fascinating performers' score, replete with liberal expression marks and brackets to draw the eye to Purcell's contrapuntal ingenuity, may be considered the English equivalent to Busoni's editions of Bach's fugues. Indeed, the comparison with Bach is one that Warlock makes explicit in the accompanying essay to the edition, observing that 'we must go forward to Bach before we can find any music which displays such a consummate mastery of all the devices of counterpoint allied to so wide a range of profoundly expressive harmony'.¹⁴⁷ Such an appeal anticipates the similar suggestions of Westrup, the common motivation being an improved reputation for Purcell by association with the later masters. Indeed, Warlock's nationalist agenda is even more explicit in the following passage:

Despite their startling originality, the Fantasias are essentially in the tradition of [the] Elizabethan polyphonists. They are the last heirs of the sixteenth century rather than the ancestors of the eighteenth. They stand at the end of a great period of English

¹⁴³ See PS(r) 7, p. xx.

¹⁴⁴ J. Frederick Bridge, 'Purcell's Fantazias and Sonatas', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 42 (1915-16), 1-13 (p. 1).

¹⁴⁵ Henry Purcell, *Fantasias for Strings*, ed. by A. Mangeot, transcribed by Peter Warlock (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1927).

¹⁴⁶ PS 31 (1959). In fact, the works were presented to a much higher editorial standard than the Mangeot/Warlock edition as early as the 1930s in a German edition edited by Herbert Just (2 vols; Berlin: Nagels Musik-Archiv, 1930-35).

¹⁴⁷ Purcell, *Fantasias for Strings*, ed. Mangeot/Warlock 'Historical Preface' [n. p.].

instrumental music, the crowning glory of a century and a half of rapid and continuous development. After them, there was complete silence in England, as far as chamber-music was concerned, until the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁴⁸

Such chauvinistic pride in Purcell's achievements in this genre is decidedly a twentieth-century phenomenon, however. The obscurity of Purcell's fantasias in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reached back even to Purcell's day, to the extent that we are not even sure whether the works were ever performed in his lifetime. Apart from Fantasia 2 in three parts, none of the fantasias survives in a set of parts suitable for performing; all sources are in score.¹⁴⁹ One of the most pressing issues in connection with the fantasias, therefore, has always been the question of why they were written at all. The main alternative to a performance is that perhaps they were exercises in contrapuntal technique. This would certainly be in keeping with the rigorous exploration of imitative ideas contained in each fantasia, but even if the original inspiration was didactic, it is surely almost inconceivable that Purcell should expend so much effort only to keep the works hidden from his colleagues, especially given that these included such enthusiastic viol players as John Gostling (better known as the 'stupendous base' for whom Purcell wrote many of the virtuoso solos in his anthems and court odes).¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, the inclusion of performance instructions such as 'Drag', 'Brisk' and 'Quick' suggests that Purcell at least imagined the possibility that the works would be performed. If they were, it must have been on the rarest of occasions and in the most intimate of surroundings, since no surviving account from any contemporary musician so much as mentions their existence.

Purcell's three fantasias a3 and nine a4 are all contained in the same volume as the 1697 Sonatas, Lbl Add. 30930, into which they were copied during 1680. The same scorebook also contains an incomplete tenth fantasia a4, a pavan a4, the five-part *Fantazia upon One Note*, and two In nomines in six and seven parts respectively.¹⁵¹ These, together with the four three-part pavans found only in British Library, Add. MS 33236, make up the complete set of Purcell's consort music.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, [n. p.].

¹⁴⁹ *PM*, pp. 106-113.

¹⁵⁰ Watkins Shaw and Robert Ford, 'Gostling, John', in *Grove Online*.

¹⁵¹ *PM*, pp. 90-97.

¹⁵² The few dance movements and overture also contained in Lbl Add. 30930 need not concern us here, since they are not directly related to Purcell's sonatas or fantasias.

In general terms these works conform to earlier descriptions of these genres from Morley to Simpson, and their immediate ancestors were the very examples by Jenkins and Locke which Roger North referred to as the last works of their kind.¹⁵³ As a result, their impact on the literature concerning Purcell's instrumental music has been to highlight supposedly conservative elements of his style, engendering what must be seen as a clear reaction against the prevailing view of Purcell's modernity, as documented above, in the first half of the twentieth century.

Purcell's instrumental music has always been recognised as having elements that belong more to the English music of the past century than to the continental repertoire. Roger North's comment on the character of Purcell's sonatas is quoted almost universally in connection with such observations:

Witness M^r H. Purcell in his noble set of sonatas, which however clog'd with somewhat of an English vein, for which they are unworthily despised, are very artificiall and good musick.¹⁵⁴

Quite how they were 'clogged with somewhat of an English vein', however, we are not told by North. There are clearly two possible grounds for his observation. Firstly, it could refer to those local details of cadence, voice-leading and melodic character that, as we have seen, Hawkins identified as peculiarly English, defined by comparison with the more suave Italian style of Corelli. Westrup took up a similar theme in his chapter on Purcell's 'Style and Development', giving examples of phenomena such as expressive chromaticism, the 'overlapping' of two alternative cadential progressions, false relations and irregularly resolved suspensions.¹⁵⁵ Unlike Hawkins, Westrup did not necessarily understand such features as English in themselves. Rather their significance was that the English, and Purcell in particular, continued to use them long after they had become obsolete on the continent: 'The chief interest of Purcell's use of false relations is that it shows him, like some of his contemporaries, still attached to older traditions'.¹⁵⁶ By the 1950s, however, a better awareness of the music of the earlier seventeenth century had begun to result in the questioning of even this approach to Purcell's harmonic 'individualities'. While such

¹⁵³ Thomas Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musick* (London: P. Short, 1597); Simpson (for abbreviations see p. 9 above). For contemporary descriptions of musical genres see Rebecca Herissone, *Music Theory in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp. 209-14.

¹⁵⁴ North, p. 310 (footnote 65).

¹⁵⁵ Westrup, pp. 246-53.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

phenomena had seemed irregular, and even 'barbarous' by the standards of Corelli and Handel, they began to seem more and more familiar when compared to earlier works, either English or Italian. Tilmouth observed that 'some commentators have isolated, as purely English or Purcellian characteristics, traits which were the common property of all western music of the period', inserting a *largo* from Colista's sixth sonata to illustrate his point.¹⁵⁷ At the very least, then, the conventional view of Purcell's harmonic eccentricity seemed in need of refinement: it was clear that the 'English vein' of his sonatas could not be explained simply by reference to this aspect of his style.

The 'rediscovery' of Purcell's fantasias and other consort music in the early twentieth century afforded a new opportunity to assess the relationship between Purcell's instrumental music and that of his predecessors. Leaving aside the eccentric treatment observed earlier in Meyer's *Early English Chamber Music*, most commentators were quick to recognise that the fantasias showed Purcell engaging directly with the English consort tradition. We have already seen that Peter Warlock regarded them to be 'essentially in the tradition of Elizabethan polyphonists', and Holland similarly observed that, 'It is in the Fantasies that Purcell makes his most unmistakeable acknowledgements to the English musical tradition'.¹⁵⁸ Later on, Denis Stevens suggested that Purcell might have composed his fantasias in direct imitation of Locke's *Consort of Four Parts*, but although the influence of Locke on Purcell's fantasia style is generally acknowledged, Stevens's conjecture that the blank pages in Purcell's manuscript (Lbl Add. 30930) were inserted to replace pages that contained Purcell's copies of Locke's fantasias now seems rather far-fetched.¹⁵⁹ It was, nevertheless, the increasing knowledge of Purcell's fantasias that suggested a second possible context to North's comments about the sonatas. Even Holland had observed that the sonatas 'exhibit not a few traces of the old contrapuntal technique', and Tilmouth amplified this point by drawing attention to the 'astonishing ingenuity' of movements like the beginning of 1683 Sonata 7.¹⁶⁰ It was now possible to observe even in the sonatas, which had previously been the quintessential 'modern' chamber

¹⁵⁷ Tilmouth, p. 120.

¹⁵⁸ Holland, *Purcell*, p. 140.

¹⁵⁹ Denis Stevens, 'Purcell's Art of Fantasia', *ML*, 33 (1952), 341-45 (p. 342).

¹⁶⁰ Holland, *Purcell*, p. 140; Tilmouth, pp. 110-11.

works of Purcell, an apparently conservative tendency to favour densely woven, polyphonic textures over the more direct tonal style of the latest Italian music.

Such readings further revealed the possibility of other forms of conservatism in the sonatas. Dart, for example, allied them with the English consort tradition on grounds of performance practice. He concluded from the title page of the 1683 sonatas that 'Purcell's first choice of thorough-bass instrument was not the harpsichord but the organ', observing that this had been the case for composers throughout the first half of the century.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, he was able to show that Purcell's sketchy thoroughbass lines and sparse provision of figures not only supported such a view, but could be used to reconstruct the missing bass part to the so-called 'violin sonata in G minor' (Z. 780).¹⁶²

It is not difficult to place such ideas in the context of the detailed reception traced thus far. The identification of conservative elements in Purcell's chamber music is in essence an alternative response to the perceived gap, which we first observed in Hawkins's *History*, between the styles of Purcell and the Italian mainstream of the early eighteenth century as represented by Corelli. Whereas Hawkins's speculation as to Purcell's Italian models led to an enduring concern to demonstrate his awareness of the development of Italian chamber music, and hence his 'modern' outlook, by allying Purcell to older English tradition, writers could stake an alternative claim for his greatness. In other words, both representations can be interpreted as attempts to mitigate the marginalisation of Purcell in the context of the history of music in Europe: the first by demonstrating his participation in the mainstream of Italian musical development, and the second by emphasising his links with English chamber music of the earlier seventeenth century, a time when the pre-eminence of the English in instrumental music was acknowledged throughout Europe. In all of the writings we have encountered thus far in this section, these two views tended to have existed side by side as different approaches to the body of works. Typically, the fantasias were introduced as 'traditional' before moving on to the sonatas, viewed overall as evidence of Purcell's Italianate tendencies but relating their contrapuntal tendencies to Purcell's experience in the older genre. This balance was to change, however, in the

¹⁶¹ Dart, 'Purcell's Chamber Music', pp. 82-83.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 85-87. Dart's reconstruction of this sonata is published in PS(r) 31, pp. 101-105.

second half of the twentieth century, with the increasing attention given to Purcell's 'historicist' tendencies.

An early indication of the new understanding of Purcell's chamber music appears in Franklin Zimmerman's 1967 biography of the composer. Having introduced the 1683 Sonatas, like Cummings, Bridge and Westrup before him, by quoting the newspaper advertisements concerning subscription and referring to Purcell's address 'to the reader', Zimmerman turns to the much discussed question of the 'great Italian masters' Purcell claimed to have imitated, suggesting that

These putative Italian models, should they be discovered one day, were probably not very important. Purcell's trio-sonatas are so like some of his fantasias in style and expression that it is fairly safe to assume that here as elsewhere he had been for the most part his own instructor in studying English masterpieces of the immediate past. Furthermore, it was a very common thing to claim Italian provenance for all sorts of compositions. Such claims should be interpreted rather as a kind of window-dressing than as confessions of deliberate eclecticism on the part of the composer.¹⁶³

Zimmerman's biography was the second of a projected series of three volumes on Purcell – the *Analytical Catalogue*, *Life and Times*, and *Analytical Essays on his Musical Forms* – that was, regrettably, never completed; thus we never really see how such views would have affected his reading of the music. The general thrust of this argument was nevertheless to gain ground in the following years, strengthened in particular by the increasing interest in Purcell's study and assimilation of 'ancient' styles noted above (p. 39, and footnote 82). In his Ph.D. thesis Robert Shay concluded that, even in the context of the general trend in early Restoration church music to look toward pre-Commonwealth examples, Purcell's engagement with older styles was in itself remarkable, and contributed greatly to his development, almost alone among his English colleagues, of a conservative, contrapuntal style:

The diligence with which Purcell pursued an interest in old polyphony in the years around 1680, copying a number of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century anthems and emulating the style of these in newly-composed works (not to mention similar interests in the viol fantasia, then also an antiquated polyphonic genre), remains remarkable, if for no other reason than because Purcell alone among the important composers of Restoration England seems to have been so deeply affected by a sense of historical consciousness.¹⁶⁴

The two most recent published studies of Purcell's consort music both draw heavily on such a view of Purcell's attitude towards the music of previous generations, though each puts a slightly different emphasis on it. Peter Holman, who

¹⁶³ Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. 103.

¹⁶⁴ Shay, 'Purcell and "Ancient" Music', p. 107.

examines the repertoire most comprehensively in his article for *The Purcell Companion*, concentrates on establishing the English precedent for Purcell's fantasias, and in a shorter discussion of the sonatas emphasises their reliance on counterpoint and other 'conservative' traits.¹⁶⁵ Martin Adams, meanwhile, uses the fantasias as a paradigmatic representation of Purcell's early training in the old polyphonic style, which he views as central to any understanding of the later music.¹⁶⁶ Against this background, the sonatas are seen as a kind of early attempt at the reconciliation of English and Continental practice that Purcell would ultimately achieve (according, at least, to this model) in the mature works of the 1690s.

Holman gives far more emphasis to the archaic nature of Purcell's fantasias than any study we have encountered hitherto. He completely rejects any idea that they might have been written with performance in mind, preferring to suggest (much as Shay implied) that they were undertaken for didactic purposes.¹⁶⁷ A short survey of his comments on each of the important consort works is revealing in its tendency to emphasise Purcell's links with tradition: the four-part pavan (Z. 752) is in a style from 'around 1600', and the three-part pavans (ZZ. 748-51) are indebted to Locke.¹⁶⁸ The seven-part *In nomine* (Z. 747) is 'in many respects [...] closer in style to sixteenth- rather than seventeenth-century *In nomines*', the three-part fantasias 'owe much to Orlando Gibbons's published set (c1620)', and the 'main models [for the fantasias a4] are Locke's fantasias, particularly those in the Consort of Four Parts'.¹⁶⁹ In more general terms it is clear that Holman sees Purcell's interest in counterpoint as a direct result of his interest in earlier styles:

When all is said and done there are several aspects of Purcell's fantasias that cannot be accounted for in the music of his immediate predecessors [...] One has to go back to the reign of James I, to John Bull and Elway Bevin (whose canons were praised by Purcell in *An Introduction to the Skill of Music* [i.e. 'The Art of Descant']), before encountering a body of English music so taken up with formal contrapuntal devices.¹⁷⁰

This interest in Purcell's cultivation of dense polyphonic textures also influences Holman's discussion of the sonatas. In fact, he even suggests that it may have been

¹⁶⁵ Holman, 'Consort Music', pp. 254-98.

¹⁶⁶ Adams, pp. 8-14, 26-36, 91-117.

¹⁶⁷ Holman, 'Consort Music', pp. 271-2.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 267.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-3.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 278.

one of the main reasons why Purcell should have been interested in the Italian trio sonata at all.¹⁷¹ Throughout his account of the sonatas, Holman emphasises their contrapuntal pedigree; indeed, his discussion consists almost entirely of a survey of the various types of fugal movement, to the extent that he neglects to mention at all those types of movement, like the opening *Grave* or slow triple-time *Largo*, many of which are more 'modern' and Italianate than the various canzonas and other fugues. Furthermore, the apparently persuasive underlying implication, that the pursuit of contrapuntal mastery creates a continuity between the two genres in which Purcell worked, is fundamentally problematic. This is because Purcell's approach to the writing of counterpoint, as we shall see in later chapters, encompasses a substantially different set of aims and techniques in the canzona movements of the sonatas when compared with the fantasias. Other movements in the sonatas come closer to the techniques of the fantasias, but Holman fails to mention these at all.

The central premise underpinning Adams's influential thesis of Purcell as conservative is that Purcell's whole style rested on his study of the contrapuntal music of previous English generations of composers, and that these techniques continued to exert an influence on even his most Italianate-sounding music of the 1690s:

The core of my conviction, which this book seeks to validate, is that despite the extraordinary surface changes in Purcell's style between his mid-teens and his death in 1695 aged around thirty-six, he was a deeply conservative composer, who had to struggle to reconcile the tide of the times [...] with the priorities of his early music.¹⁷²

Adams treats the instrumental music at length in two chapters, dealing respectively with the independent music for strings (Chapter 6) and the instrumental movements of works for court, church and stage (Chapter 7). An exploration of his analytical approach in these chapters will await the next chapter, but some of the comments he makes in part one of his book, 'Stylistic development and influences', will serve as a useful introduction.

Adams's view of the importance of Purcell's consort music is clearly in line with that of Peter Warlock some seventy years before: 'He produced the final flowering of a tradition which had proved remarkably persistent and immutable – even esoteric: not only did it last through the Civil War and the Restoration into Purcell's lifetime but, in his hands and those of his immediate forbears, it also continued to use the

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 281.

¹⁷² Adams, p. ix.

Renaissance-based genres from which it arose, long after most of these and their equivalents had fallen out of use in France and Italy'.¹⁷³ He also seems to agree with Holman that Purcell's interest in consort music stretched beyond the works of his immediate forbears, as for example when he observes that Purcell's *In nomines* 'lie at the most conservative end of *In nomine* practice, in that they show little absorption of modern instrumental styles'.¹⁷⁴ An important part of Adams's understanding of Purcell's conservatism, however, is that it represents a conscious choice on the part of the composer:

Purcell was a natural conservative, not in the sense of being old-fashioned, but in that he seems to have been dissatisfied by modern developments which abandoned that polyphonic and motivic rigour characteristic of those earlier styles which interested him. Much of his unusually wide stylistic development was involved with a struggle to adapt the priorities of [the] fantasias to more modern styles – and quite a struggle it sometimes seems to have been, for the necessary conflation of textural types and structural methods did not come easily.¹⁷⁵

As the latter part of this passage shows, Adams regards the experience of this self-conscious emulation of the contrapuntal fantasia as crucial to the understanding of Purcell's later music, a point that becomes clear in his discussion of the sonatas, a genre in which, Adams seems to suggest, this 'struggle' was not quite resolved. Rather the two styles sit uncomfortably in the sonatas, 'embody[ing] the paradoxical tension between his modernistic and conservative aspirations'.¹⁷⁶ In the context of his overall view of Purcell as a conservative, Adams regards the best movements of the sonatas to be those that most closely resemble the technique of the fantasias, while those with 'overtly Italianate' qualities tend to be criticised: 'short-breathed periodicity is nigglingly persistent, and the triple-invertible counterpoint mere mechanistic juggling'.¹⁷⁷ This is a long way, then, from the championing of Italianate qualities in Purcell's music as signs of its importance in a European context.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

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With the identification of a predominantly conservative bent to Purcell's chamber music we have come full circle to arrive once more at the early eighteenth-century reception of these works as essentially old-fashioned when compared to the latest Italian style. At the same time, we arrive once more at the death of Purcell, this time mythologized, in one of the *Orpheus Britannicus* poems, as the death of his art in a figurative sense:

But *Discord*, in a frightfull form,
With all her Retinue of War,
The Drum, the Pulpit, and the Barr,
The croaking Crowds tumultuous noise,
And ev'ry hoarse Out-landish voice,
Proclaim'd so loud th'impending Storm,
That frighted hence, thou didst for Refuge fly,
To reassume thy Station in the Sky:¹⁷⁸

In keeping with what we have seen of the early eighteenth-century history of his music, Purcell is portrayed here as under threat from the encroachment of the modern style: like Orpheus, he ultimately suffers because his music is 'drowned out' by louder, harsher sounds.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, it is not just the modern, but the foreign style – the 'hoarse outlandish voice' – which is invoked by the anonymous author of this further extract from the poem quoted earlier. Here, however, we come upon the crucial difference between the identification of conservative elements in Purcell's style around 1720 and the ostensibly similar observation made by modern scholars such as Peter Holman and Martin Adams. Whereas in the early eighteenth-century musical climate, such idiosyncratic characteristics were understood as detrimental qualities, today they are often highly praised. During the two hundred years in which Purcell's 'conservatism' has been first suppressed, then rediscovered and, eventually, lauded, the very idea of Purcell's relationship with older styles has undergone a fundamental transformation, or at least an important shift of context. Peter Holman in particular observes that the image of Purcell the conservative is particularly attractive in the

¹⁷⁸ Anonymous, 'Another *Ode* on the same Occasion. By a Person of Quality', in Purcell, *Orpheus Britannicus I*, p. iv; also quoted in Zimmerman, *Life and Times*, p. 330 (See above, p. 17 and footnote 8, for a different passage from the same poem).

¹⁷⁹ As, indeed, is Orpheus in Sandys's translation of Ovid: 'His songs had all their weapons charm'd, if noise / Of Berecunthian shalms, clapt hands, loud cries, / Drums, howling Bacchanals; with frantick sound / Had not his all-appeasing musick drown'd. / The stones then blush with silenc'd *Orpheus* blood'; Sandys, *Metamorphosis*, p. 212.

modern climate, suggesting that 'we tend to like music clogged with the English vein'.¹⁸⁰ It may be that this modern taste is partly related to the constant search for new and unexplored repertoire demanded by the recording industry. Purcell's sonatas and fantasias are written in an idiom that seems fresh and individual to the modern ear, but is close enough to the familiar staples of the Corelli-Vivaldi repertoire to appeal to the general listener who is not familiar with earlier styles.

That the same observations about Purcell's music could give rise to such different conclusions is a salutary reminder of the problems of founding aesthetic judgements on such historically contingent categories. 'In matters of taste', wrote Roger North in his *Memoires of Musick*, 'there is no criterium of better and worse, and men determine upon fancy and prejudice, and not upon intrinsick worth'.¹⁸¹ In this context 'fancy', and in particular, 'prejudice', are not to be understood with the negative connotations we ascribe to them today, but simply as alternatives to a judgement based on 'intrinsick worth'; in other words, North's statement amounts to a recognition that musical taste is highly conditional upon fashion and subjective judgement, and that it is only in the context of these that musical works acquire aesthetic significance and 'value'. For us, in other words, the reception of Purcell's instrumental music can be understood through the continual flux – *Metamorphosis*, even – of musical taste and fashion since his lifetime. This attitude towards the vagaries of aesthetic judgement is also one that can be observed throughout Restoration discourse on the history of artistic endeavours, informing subjects as diverse as John Dryden's attitude to Shakespeare and Chaucer, Sir Christopher Wren's understanding of the origins of Classical architecture, and Thomas Tudway's account of the history of English sacred music.¹⁸²

The many diverse factors traced in this account, including publishing markets, national pride and changing historiographical models, operate within differing intellectual contexts and generate varying patterns of emphasis. All have played a role in the formation of the modern popular and scholarly images of Purcell. Mary

¹⁸⁰ Holman, p. 93.

¹⁸¹ North, p. 317.

¹⁸² Dryden, preface to *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), reprinted in John Dryden, *Selected Criticism*, ed. by James Kinsley and George Parfitt (Oxford: OUP, 1970), pp. 159-62; Lydia M. Soo, *Wren's "Tracts" on Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 131-2, 53-5; Tudway, prefaces to *Services and Anthems*, in Spink, *Cathedral Music*, pp. 435-49 (esp. pp. 48-9).

Monroe addresses these issues in detail, and much of the information she collated has since appeared in the publications that came forth around the time of Purcell's tercentenary.¹⁸³ In many ways, Monroe's thesis draws a line under the process of reception and the history of scholarly engagement with Purcell's works that I have summarised: it is both complete, in that it draws its conclusions from the wealth of material that we have encountered here, and incomplete, in that it shares with this material some of its most important shortcomings. In order to progress very much further, one must begin to re-examine the very aims of this branch of the musicological endeavour: there simply may not be much to be gained from continuing to approach Purcell's instrumental music in this fashion. Many of the basic characteristics and aims of the literature, however, and in particular its strengths, weaknesses and limits, can suggest ways to move forward from this point.

One of the most obvious characteristics of the body of literature discussed thus far is its narrow focus. Even the differences of emphasis of successive scholars, as we have seen, do little to disguise the fact that a large amount of material has simply been recycled, ever since Burney's *History*. The situation is partly a function of the nature of Purcell scholarship, which is carried out by a relatively small number of individuals who are intimately familiar with one another's work, and who are often the same individuals who train the next generation of scholars that will take an interest in Purcell. At a more basic level, though, it is the result of a failure to think beyond the boundaries of a style-comparative model that essentially holds that Purcell's music can be fully understood by seeking to identify and account for all of the composers and styles that influenced it.

It is not difficult to identify the most obvious problem with this approach: it can only aspire to illuminate the musical techniques and forms that Purcell used in the very limited sense of how they fulfil the expectations established by other, already familiar styles. Thus the questions the writers of the literature have posed have very often been displaced, rather than answered. Once again, in the context of the marginalisation of Purcell and his scholars on a European scale, this is a logical, if not inevitable, strategy: by associating his music with more central canonic developments, it could be made to seem less peripheral. At some stage, however, it would be good to

¹⁸³ Mary Monroe, 'From "English Vein" to "Italian Notes": The Stylistic Evolution of Purcell's Chamber Music for Strings' (Ph.D., Columbia University, 1994).

leave such an approach behind; if Purcell is truly a great composer it must surely be possible to account for the power of his music in terms other than those of successful imitation of other, acknowledged masters.

Such an observation in the work of others brings with it an obligation to acknowledge equally my own complicity in the project that I have, up until this point, attempted to describe from without. Any musical commentator invests a great deal in the works and composers they write about, and as we have seen, Purcellian scholars seem if anything even more inclined than most to use their analysis of the music to 'make a case' for Purcell. This only really becomes problematic when one considers the mutability of most criteria of musical and aesthetic 'value'. For almost a hundred and fifty years between Hawkins's *History* and Westrup's *Purcell*, what made his music great was that he strove towards a High Baroque *stile concertato* at a time when other English composers seemed incapable of throwing off the 'crudities' of the mid-century declamatory style; for Michael Tilmouth, meanwhile, it was Purcell's fusion of Italian style with English practice, which he compared with the achievements of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.¹⁸⁴ In the latter part of the twentieth century, as we have seen, Purcell's fidelity to the English contrapuntal tradition became the defining feature of his greatness, and for Martin Adams we should add that the idea of thematic and motivic unity, so prevalent in post-Second World War approaches to analysis, fulfils a similar role.

If such differing, and in some cases mutually conflicting ideas can legitimately be forwarded as explanations of Purcell's music and as intimations of its quality, one is justified in asking why any new approach to these works should not be similarly contingent upon the preconceptions of its author. This does not mean, however, that there is no point in seeking new ways to add to our understanding of his music: indeed, if anything it offers an opportunity, even a challenge, to each generation of commentators to find fresh and illuminating approaches that will maintain his interest and relevance to their own musical and intellectual pursuits. More than this, though, I still believe it is possible to improve upon some of the methods we have encountered in this tour of Purcell's reception, to come up with a 'better' way of understanding

¹⁸⁴ Tilmouth, pp. 111-12. Tilmouth, like Westrup, is a classic example of the tendency to call canonic composers as witnesses to Purcell's merits. Elsewhere in this article he compares Purcell's ability to sustain long contrapuntal workings without cadence with the techniques of Bach and even Wagner.

Purcell's chamber music. Central to this belief is the fact that, despite their differing conclusions, all the approaches described above rely on a notion of musical influence that becomes increasingly unsatisfactory as soon as one examines Purcell's music closely.

The style-comparative approach I identify in Purcellian literature engenders a particular brand of musical analysis, which seeks to identify points of contact between works by Purcell and other, related repertoires. The ways in which this is achieved range from general observations about formal procedures and particular style traits (for example, Tilmouth's identification of slow-movement forms and *da capo* principles as common to both Purcell's sonatas and Italian repertoire) to identifications of particular thematic resemblances between composers, used as evidence for direct contact between composers' works (Tilmouth once more, and see also Helene Wessely-Kropik's examination of the relationship between Purcell and the Italian sonata).¹⁸⁵ As we have seen, the net result of this approach is to account for the characteristics of Purcell's music by virtue of their presence in other works. Even more disappointingly, however, it implies an essentially passive role for Purcell: old works act on composers to produce new works.

It is at this level that I believe it is possible to rethink how we approach Purcell's music in general, and the fantasias and sonatas in particular. Rather than citing the influence of other works, I develop a model that emphasises the *agency* of the composer; in other words, I propose to replace (or at least supplement) the traditional 'what' question with a series of inquiries into the 'how' and 'why' of Purcell's use of those features that others have identified in his music as influences. In many cases it is possible to reconstruct the compositional devices and processes that Purcell used as he worked. By examining these, we can often see how he used those materials he garnered from English and Italian repertoires, and from here suggest why it was that these interested him (or, indeed, how he might have found them lacking). In this way, one can arrive at much stronger conclusions about Purcell's attitudes towards composing and towards music as an art, with which we can perhaps begin to fill in those lacunae in the 'proper evidences' that have previously given rise to so much of the kind of 'perpetuall guessing' that so frustrated Roger North.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Tilmouth, pp. 114-15, 116-17. WK, pp. 127-141. (For abbreviations see p. 9 above)

¹⁸⁶ North, p. 317; see p. 12 above.

CHAPTER 2

Analysing Purcell's Instrumental Music

ANALYSIS IN PURCELLIAN LITERATURE

The analysis of Purcell's instrumental music has suffered from the reception history outlined in Chapter 1. Too often, it has relied on essentially descriptive tools, focussing attention on superficial resemblances between works as evidence of stylistic influence. Even where sustained analysis of this music has been undertaken, it has rarely been accompanied by a critical examination of its theoretical premises, with the result that many of its insights are undermined by anachronism. In this chapter I examine some of the reasons behind the paucity of analytical discourse, proposing a more detailed engagement with Purcell's compositional techniques, and in particular his approach to the writing of imitation and fugue, as a window onto a more fundamental insight into Purcell's chamber music for strings.

The first movement of 1683 Sonata 1 (Z. 790) encapsulates the problems of analysing Purcell's sonatas: at the head of his first major publication, with its heavy emphasis on the Italian style, Purcell placed not a harmonically conceived 'Grave' in the manner of Colista or Corelli, but a finely crafted imitative movement, reminiscent of his earlier fantasias. For Westrup, this was evidence of the continuity of Purcell's approach to the fantasias and sonatas. Yet his notion of the novelty of the sonata movement remains perfunctory, with no detailed evidence to support his observations:

Superficially the sonatas of 1683 may seem to be a complete break with the old tradition, but a close inspection will show many minor points of resemblance with the fantasias. The technique is different in its reliance on the *basso continuo* and in the use of a less rigid system of imitation, but details here and there unmistakably recall the earlier manner. The opening of the first sonata is a clear echo of the earlier style [see Ex. 2.1].¹

Although Westrup seems to be clear in his own mind about what differentiates this movement from the fantasias, his failure to unpack his observations into strong

¹ Westrup, pp. 232-33.

Ex. 2.1. 1683 Sonata 1/i (complete).

The musical score for Purcell's 1683 Sonata 1/i is presented in five systems, each containing three staves (treble, alto, and bass). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is common time (C). The score includes figured bass notation (numbers 1-7) under the bass staff of each system, indicating the harmonic structure for the basso continuo.

System 1 (Measures 1-6):

6 5 6 6 4 6 5 4 3

System 2 (Measures 7-11):

6 5 6 7 6 6 2 6 5 4 3 7 6 6 2

System 3 (Measures 12-16):

6 5 9 7 4 3 4 3 7 6 6 6 7 4 3

System 4 (Measures 17-20):

7 6 6 7 7 6 2 7 6 4 2 7 7 6

System 5 (Measures 21-24):

6 2 6 6 7 6 7

analytical points makes it impossible to recover his basic insights. Indeed, his comments become very difficult to support: in connection with 1683 Sonata 1/i, 'reliance on the *basso continuo*' is far too strong a description of a figured bass that is essentially descriptive rather than prescriptive.² Similarly, the imitation is every bit as carefully worked as that in the fantasias, and Westrup's use of the word 'rigid' is in

² See Walter Kolneder, 'Der Generalbass in der Triosonaten von Purcell', in *Heinrich Schütz e il suo Tempo* [Atti del 1° Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Urbino, 26-31 luglio 1978], ed. Giancarlo Rostirolla (Rome: Società Italiana del Flauto Dolce, 1981), pp. 281-99 (pp. 288-89).

any case highly ambiguous; does he intend it to mean 'strict' and 'thorough', or 'laboured' and 'inflexible'?

One of the most obvious ways in which writers have attempted to improve on this kind of analysis is to draw comparisons with the music of influential contemporaries. Aside from the general methodological objection that I outlined towards the end of Chapter 1, a major shortcoming of this approach is its frequent reliance upon superficial details and overly selective comparisons. Take Helene Wessely-Kropik's comments on the opening of 1683 Sonata 1:

Colista was a noted contrapuntist, though he was an exponent of the Italian harmonically-grounded contrapuntal movement, which the English composer, accustomed as he was to the more linear Fancy Style, first had to master. The following excerpt from the introduction to Colista's Fifth Sonata [see Ex. 2.2a] shows that even the beginning of Purcell's First Sonata in G minor from 1683 owes something both to Fancy Style and to contemporary Italian sonata literature.³

Like Westrup, Wessely-Kropik is concerned to show that Purcell's sonata movement adopts a different approach to imitation from that in the fantasias. She does so by drawing attention to the existence of imitative writing in a similar context in an Italian sonata. As with Westrup's appeal to the *basso continuo*, however, this idea is undeveloped in the surrounding text. The quoted passage (Ex. 2.2a), far from proving her point, actually greatly problematises the issue since the imitation is handled very differently by Lonati: whereas Purcell maintains forward momentum with cross-rhythms and frequent suspensions, both of which are 'composed-in' to the material, Lonati's point of imitation is shorter, has quicker note-values, and is designed to conform to a series of block vertical harmonies. Furthermore, Wessely-Kropik's use of these two bars to characterise the whole of Lonati's movement masks the fact that much of the piece is not at all like this. In between the short passages of imitation are longer episodic sections driven by simple thoroughbass progressions, something that would be quite out of place in Purcell's movement (Ex. 2.2b).

³ WK, pp. 128-29. The author attributes the sonata to Colista on the evidence of contemporary English sources. The work has since been reattributed to Lonati, largely thanks to the work of Peter Allsop, and is available in a modern edition as Carlo Ambrogio Lonati, *Simfonie a 3* [in g, g and A], ed. Peter Allsop, Italian Seventeenth-Century Instrumental Music, Series I: Rome (Credito, Devon: Novello Orpheus Editions, 1990), I, 8-14. See Peter Allsop, 'Problems of Ascription in the Roman *Simfonia* of the late Seventeenth Century: Colista and Lonati', *The Music Review*, 50 (1989), pp. 34-44 *passim*.

Ex. 2.2. Carlo Ambrogio Lonati, Sonata in G minor: first movement.

(a) Opening:

(b) bb. 4³-6³:

Methods like these rarely deepen our understanding of particular works or reveal much about Purcell as a composer, because they are so vague. Moreover, this very imprecision means that the same evidence can lead to quite different conclusions, as shown by a third and final snippet of commentary on 1683 Sonata 1/i, from Martin Adams:

The first movement of Sonata No.1 (1683) in G minor (Z. 790) is as pure an example of *stile antico* as the In nomines; though as a reminder that Purcell had no monopoly on such textural types we might turn again to Colista(?), whose fifth sonata, as quoted by Wessely-Kropik, is strikingly similar to Purcell's sonata and to Fantasia No. 4 (Z. 735).⁴

Whereas both Westrup and Wessely-Kropik used the movement as evidence for Purcell's fluency in a putative 'Harmonic' or 'Italian' style of counterpoint *despite* an outward resemblance towards the fantasias, Adams is concerned to demonstrate Purcell's conservatism. For him, Wessely-Kropik's comparison is attractive since it makes Purcell look less isolated, even though Adams misconstrues Wessely-Kropik's main point by citing it in this connection. The introduction of the opening of Fantasia 4 (Z. 735; Ex. 2.3) to the debate, purely on the grounds of a tenuous melodic resemblance towards Lonati's movement, does nothing but confuse the issue, since this work is very different from both the Purcell and Lonati movements under discussion.

⁴ Adams, p. 34.

Ex. 2.3. Fantasia 4, bb. 1-4.



None of these three short excerpts attempts a thoroughgoing analysis of 1683 Sonata 1/i. The observations made by each author, however, and the underlying assumptions they reveal, are broadly representative of the weaknesses of much analysis of Purcell's instrumental music. In general, this has moved very little beyond the conventional understanding of Purcell's Sonatas as conservative (and, for all their Italianate pretensions, 'English'), which I traced in Chapter 1 to Hawkins and even further back to Roger North.

One of the reasons why the analysis of this repertoire has remained underdeveloped is that the most common tools of musical analysis are ill-equipped to account for the characteristics of Purcell's instrumental music. This is particularly true of approaches to musical form: a movement like 1683 Sonata 1/i would be very difficult to analyse in this way, since it has no internal structural divisions and contains no literal repetition of material throughout. The same could be said of the opening movements of no fewer than eight more sonatas in the 1683 collection.

Such a problem reveals the limitations of an understanding of musical forms as generative prototypes, a common stance in earlier studies of Purcell's music, and one that was expressed succinctly by A.K. Holland when he wrote that Purcell

arrived at a moment in musical history when the vocal and instrumental forms had not yet crystallised into set moulds and when the principles of balance and contrast were much less sharply defined than they were to become in the next century.⁵

Holland's 'mould' metaphor implies a compositional process in which composers 'pour in' musical material to a pre-existent and infinitely reusable cast. Despite the recognition that such a model is of little use in the analysis of Purcell's chamber

⁵ Holland, *Purcell*, p. 136.

music, later writers have continued to approach his works with this attitude. Michael Tilmouth, for example, referred to the fantasia as a form despite quoting Purcell's own description of the genre, which seems to make the *absence* of any set form a defining characteristic: 'a Piece of Composition full of Harmony, but which cannot be reduc'd under any of the regular kinds'.⁶

Tilmouth is probably wrong to read Purcell's definition in this way, since his comment about the 'regular kinds' refers not just to musical form, but to the wider concept of genre. Purcell means that the fantasia is not a pavan, an almain, or an In nomine, and while some of these genres do have specific forms associated with them, these forms are not the only factors that identify them with one or other genre. This conflation of form and genre as concepts is common in many areas of twentieth-century musicology, yet would have been unfamiliar to contemporaries of Purcell, who maintained a clear distinction between the two. Here, for example, is Christopher Simpson's description of the pavan:

A Pavan, (be it of 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 Parts) doth commonly consist of three Strains; each Strain to be play'd twice over. Now, as to any piece of Musick that consists of Strains, take these following observations.

All Musick concludes in the Key of its Composition; which is known by the Bass, as hath been shewn. This Key hath always other keys proper to it for middle closes. (see pag. 36, 37.) If your Pavan (or what else) be of three Strains; the first Strain may end in the Key of the Composition, as the last doth: but the middle Strain must always end in the key of a middle Close.⁷

Simpson clearly conceives of the genre and form of the pavan as separate categories: he describes the formal principles of music 'in strains' but nowhere does he suggest that it is this characteristic alone that distinguishes the pavan from other genres. Neither, of course, would Tilmouth or any other more recent commentator have done. Nevertheless, so many of the genres to which we are accustomed from later repertoires are themselves defined by formal principles (rondo, sonata form, the *da capo* aria) that we can easily fall into thinking of earlier music in the same way.⁸

The establishment of distinctions between genres, rather than forms, is an attractive proposition for Purcell's sonatas, in which comparable movements from different works often have many features in common. Wessely-Kropik takes exactly

⁶ Edward Phillips, *The New World of Words*, 5th edn (London, 1696), 'Fantasie' [n. p.]; quoted in Tilmouth, p. 110.

⁷ Simpson, pp. 116-117.

⁸ For a more detailed discussion of this point see Laurence Dreyfus, *Bach and the Patterns of Invention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 135-44.

this approach, dividing the various kinds of movement found in Purcell's sonatas into six movement types (*Satztypen*) founded on what she calls *Familienähnlichkeiten* or 'family resemblances'.⁹ Here again, however, the 'mould' approach can be damaging: Wessely-Kropik's *Satztypen* are founded on disparate criteria, yet they are treated as strict taxonomic categories, with the result that features that vary within groupings or occur across their boundaries are severely obscured. Some genres are defined by their positions in the sonatas ('opening movements [*Stirnsätze*]', 'internal slow movements [*zentrale langsame Sätze*]'), another according to nominalist principles ('canzonas', which are so labelled by Purcell) and still others according to particular musical characteristics ('Fugal movements [*fugierte Sätze*]', 'disguised dances [*verkappte Tänze*]'). The final group seems to be a catch-all for movements that are not already accounted for; it includes 'introductions, codas and echo-formations [*Einleitungen, Anhangs- und Echobildungen*]'.¹⁰

While these *Satztypen* lend a systematic feel to Wessely-Kropik's account of the sonatas, they severely misrepresent their contents. Many of the 'internal slow movements' are dance-like, for example, while many 'fugal movements' are in fact 'canzonas' in all but name. 'Fugal movements' is a misleading category in any case, since imitative writing of the kind that Purcell called 'fuge' is present in the *majority* of sonata movements, and can be found in any of Wessely-Kropik's *Satztypen*. Ultimately, the problems of identifying coherent genres within Purcell's sonatas make it more profitable to understand each movement as existing within a network of different conventions concerning forms, techniques and styles. Thus the goal of analysis should not be the categorisation of the work but an understanding of how Purcell balanced the often conflicting demands of these conventions, or indeed if he failed to do so, why.

Holland's 'mould' analogy has a further implication for the use of formal analysis in late seventeenth-century music: it suggests strongly that the history of such

⁹ WK, pp. 110-21. The terminology does not seem to be related to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, first published just two years earlier: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968; repr. 1972). Wittgenstein uses *Familienähnlichkeiten* to describe the multiple relationships between senses of a word describing a concept that nevertheless defies exact definition. The classic example he discusses is the word 'game' (see *Ibid.*, 31-6); the first person to have suggested extending these ideas to artistic genres appears to have been Robert Elliott, in Robert C. Elliott, 'The Definition of Satire: A Note on Method', *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 11 (1962), 19-23 (p. 22).

¹⁰ WK, p. 110.

forms constitutes a gradual development towards an ideal that would only later be fully realised (by implication, in the later eighteenth century). Under such a model, the work of Purcell and his contemporaries assumes a prototypical role: in this respect, Holland's position is strikingly similar to the views of Hawkins a century and a half before him, except that Hawkins was more concerned with the Italianate qualities of modern melody and 'aire'. Whether applied to the history of 'tonality' or to musical form, however, this approach is particularly problematic since the analyst is inevitably drawn to those features of the music that appear to anticipate the later strengths of the ideal model, at the expense of other factors that may be even more important and revealing in the original context. The resulting analysis is deeply susceptible to anachronism of the kind that has been widely condemned in recent studies of early music, a problem well summarised by Margaret Bent:

All modes of analysis that draw their criteria and their procedures from musical languages [...] other than that of the music under consideration, or from allegedly neutral universal principles, are doomed to anachronism, and in fact do a rather poor job of identifying let alone explaining the central and recurrent musical phenomena.¹¹

Anachronism can seem relatively benign, especially when it simply involves the use of a modern word for a phenomenon that, the reasoning goes, would have been readily recognised by contemporaries: the use of words like 'dominant' and 'subdominant' to describe chords and keys relative to a given tonic, for example. The problem is that the system of thought to which these terms belong inevitably exerts an influence on the process of analysis. In this case, the hierarchy of related keys, together with a strong dominant-tonic relationship (often called a 'polarity') are central characteristics of the system of Western tonality, to the extent that the use of these names is always a statement about the relationship between this system and the work in question.

Another good example would be Michael Tilmouth's lengthy discussion of Purcell's 'canzonas', which he explicitly compares with Bach's fugal principles.¹² Tilmouth's desire to demonstrate the 'greatness' of Purcell's instrumental music, itself motivated (as we saw in Chapter 1) by the strong nationalist imperative in Purcellian scholarship, leads him to emphasise what he sees as Purcell's anticipation of Bach's

¹¹ Margaret Bent, 'The Grammar of Early Music: Preconditions for Analysis', in *Tonal Structures in Early Music*, ed. Cristle Collins Judd (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 15-59 (p. 25).

¹² Tilmouth, pp. 117-19.

style, which is generally acknowledged as the apogee of Baroque fugal writing, despite the fact that the canzonas demonstrate only one part of Purcell's fugal technique. Such reasoning, needless to say, is by no means confined to scholars of Purcell's music, but it is nevertheless a remarkably accurate demonstration of the situation described by Ian Bent and Anthony Pople in their article on 'Analysis' for the *New Grove*:

The preoccupation which the 19th century had with the nature of 'genius' led to the phrasing of the initial question not as 'How does it work?' but as 'What makes this great?', and this remained the initial question for some analytical traditions in the 20th century. Since the 'scientific', comparative method was predominant over evaluation in such traditions, and since only works of genius possessed the quality of structural coherence, it followed that comparison of a work with an idealized model of structure or process produced a measure of its greatness.¹³

Avoiding such problems is admittedly no easy task. One cannot, for example, simply advocate a return to contemporary principles of analysis, since such a concept did not exist at the time: fundamentally, one could argue that the very act of analysis of this music is anachronistic. Yet the absence of a body of analytical literature does not indicate a lack of interest on the part of contemporary musicians in understanding how music 'worked'. On the contrary, the study of works by acknowledged masters seems to have played a crucial role in Restoration musical pedagogy. We know that Purcell put considerable effort into the copying of vocal music by Byrd, Gibbons and others from parts into full score, a process that would have revealed much about the workings of these pieces.¹⁴ Later in his career, it was exactly this practice that Purcell was to recommend to readers of his compositional tutor, 'The Art of Descant', as the best means to master complex techniques.¹⁵

Any new musical analysis must account for the characteristics of the music in a way that is intelligible to its modern readers, and a dogmatic insistence on the use of contemporary terminology to the exclusion of more modern concepts is unlikely to fulfil this requirement. Nevertheless, Margaret Bent's plea for detailed knowledge of musical idioms as a 'precondition' for their analysis draws attention to the futility of ignoring or, worse, contradicting what we know about how contemporaries understood their music. Such 'presentist' analysis might tell us much about how a

¹³ Ian Bent and Anthony Pople, 'Analysis', in *Grove Online*.

¹⁴ Shay, 'Purcell and "Ancient" Music', pp. 121-31; Shay, 'Purcell as Collector', pp. 35-50.

¹⁵ *AD*, p. 144.

particular analyst hears the music, but reveals nothing about how or why the music came to be like it is.

For Purcell's instrumental music, the most obvious way to ground new analytical approaches in knowledge of contemporary musical thought is to examine how Purcell uses contrapuntal and imitative devices, which he called 'fuge', in the fantasias and sonatas. As we have seen, the presence of arcane fugal devices in Purcell's music is widely recognised as a stylistic marker of conservatism, but few have actually sought to engage with them as a way of understanding how Purcell composed. Recent scholars of other composers have had considerable success with such methods, however. In *Bach and the Patterns of Invention*, Laurence Dreyfus sought the 'historical *modus operandi* that informs the practice of Bach's daily craft', and my debt to his analyses of Bach's fugues in the '48' will be immediately obvious both from my dissatisfaction with previous Purcellian analysis and from my approach to Purcell's chamber music.¹⁶ More recently, similar approaches have been brought to bear on sixteenth-century music, notably by John Milsom.¹⁷ By attempting to read Purcell's compositional habits along similar lines, I hope to demonstrate that such analysis of his music can provide a genuine insight into the way that he composed and the principles that informed his musical choices.

Manuscript source materials as evidence of compositional process

Although the analysis of compositional process has taken on broad currency as a means of understanding the music of numerous composers, such studies have traditionally focussed on the extent to which a composer's working methods can be revealed through the close analysis of variant details in the earliest manuscript sources, typically in the form of additions, deletions and corrections notated by the composer or substantial variation between texts of comparable authority. The

¹⁶ Dreyfus, *Patterns of Invention*, p. 30, and see Chapter 5, 'Matters of Kind' (pp. 135-168).

¹⁷ John Milsom, 'Absorbing Lassus', *EM*, 33 (2005), 99-114 (pp. 305-320). Milsom adopts a similar approach in 'Analysing Josquin', *The Josquin Companion*, ed. R. Sherr (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp. 431-84, and promises a more expansive exposition of his ideas in two forthcoming studies: 'Crecquillon, Clemens, and four-voice *fuga*', and 'Stretto *fuga* in principle and practice'. Another author to investigate the potential of imitation as an analytical tool is Joshua Rifkin; see 'Miracles, Motivicity, and Mannerism: Adrian Willaert's *Videns Dominus flentes sorores Lazari* and some Aspects of Motet Composition in the 1520s', *Hearing the Motet: Essays on the Motet of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Dolores Pesce (New York: OUP, 1997), pp. 243-64.

pioneering work of Gustav Nottebohm in the 1860s and 1870s on Beethoven's compositional sketches paved the way for well over a century of further investigation, and in the past forty years a number of important studies have attempted to examine the practices of earlier composers, including J. S. Bach, Mozart, and Handel, from a similar perspective.¹⁸

No full-length study of Purcell's compositional process as revealed through the manuscript sources of his works has yet been published, but a number of smaller investigations have indicated the potentially revealing nature of this approach to his music. The identification and description of manuscript sources containing Purcell's music, together with related issues such as the qualities of his handwriting, have always occupied a central place within the scholarship surrounding the composer, and more recently these same sources have been the focus of a more explicit attempt to understand how Purcell composed, and the attitudes that shaped his compositional priorities.¹⁹

This attempt has given rise to a number of insights into Purcell's working methods: he was a composer who often left substantially different versions of the same piece, suggesting a desire to improve upon earlier versions or, in some cases, provide alternative versions appropriate for use in different circumstances; he frequently excised or replaced short unsatisfactory passages of works that were otherwise complete, and he seems never to have considered a completed movement beyond improvement, correcting obvious grammatical and notational errors, and making small changes to voice-leading (especially at cadences), and chromatic alterations to clarify the sense of key, almost whenever he was engaged in copying an

¹⁸ On Nottebohm and the subsequent history of Beethovenian 'sketch studies' see Douglas Johnson, 'Beethoven Scholars and Beethoven's Sketches', *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 2 (1978), 3–17 *passim*. Robert Lewis Marshall, *The Compositional Process of J.S. Bach* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972); Alan Tyson, *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); David Ross Hurley, *Handel's Muse: Patterns of Creation in his Oratorios and Musical Dramas, 1743-1751* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

¹⁹ The principal source studies are listed in part (b) of the bibliography provided by Robert Thompson in the 'Purcell' article for *Grove Online*; with the publication of *PM* in 2000, most have been superseded. The most recent publications to deal specifically with Purcell's working methods include Adams (many passages, including for example the discussion of the Overture in G, pp. 118-19), Rebecca Herissone, 'Purcell's Revisions of his own Works', in *Purcell Studies*, pp. 51-86 (containing material from two earlier, unpublished dissertations: 'The Compositional Techniques of Henry Purcell as Revealed Through Autograph Revisions made to his Works' (M.Mus., King's College, London, 1993), and 'The Theory and Practice of Composition in the English Restoration Period' (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1996)), and Robert Shay, 'Purcell's Revisions to the Funeral Sentences Revisited', *Early Music*, 26 (1998), pp. 457-67.

earlier work. These characterisations are based on particular physical observations concerning the surviving sources (scratched-out or crossed-out notes or passages; torn-out pages, pasted or pinned 'correction slips' inserted over a replaced passage; changes in ink type) and, often tellingly, on the comparison of variant sources. Such methods frequently reveal surprisingly detailed aspects of Purcell's working habits, such as Rebecca Herissone's remark that Purcell typically composed the outer parts of orchestral and choral movements first, before going back to complete the inner parts: the number of sources to survive with the inner voices missing, or completed in a different ink (often with alterations to the original outer voices added in the new ink) makes this a compelling interpretation.²⁰

The earliest sources of Purcell's consort music exhibit numerous examples of all the kinds of changes described here, and thus might be thought to offer considerable potential for the exploration of his compositional methods.²¹ For the present purposes, however, there is unfortunately very little to be gleaned from this approach. This is partly because of the nature of the sources, which generally preserve texts from comparatively late in the compositional process (and are thus poor records of Purcell's actual composition of fugal passages), and partly to do with the nature of the fugal textures, which frequently invalidate the common models of Purcell's compositional process, thereby precluding what have proved to be some of the most fruitful lines of inquiry in other genres.

The fantasias and In nomines have a comparatively simple source background. The only autograph source is Purcell's scorebook, Lbl Add. 30930 (see above, p. 59), and the only other contemporary source to preserve the full set of consort music (New York Public Library, Drexel MS 5061) contains no substantive variant readings, and probably derives directly from the autograph.²² This means that any information about the composition of the works is most likely to be contained within Lbl Add. 30930 itself. Armed with this knowledge, the large number of corrections apparent in the source would seem to be revealing, if it were not for the fact that in almost all cases

²⁰ Herissone, 'Purcell's Revisions', pp. 56-7.

²¹ For the most up-to-date discussion of this most intensively studied group of sources, see *PM*, pp. 84-100, 106-25. More detail concerning the actual texts and their comparative readings is available in the relevant volumes of Purcell's *Works: Twelve Sonatas of Three Parts*, PS(r) 5, pp. ix-xvii, 144-6; *Ten Sonatas of Four Parts*, PS(r) 7, pp. ix-xxiii, 145-52; *Fantazias and Miscellaneous Instrumental Music*, PS(r) 31, pp. ix-xvi, 117-27.

²² See *PM*, pp. 106-9.

these must belong to the final stages of the compositional process, long after the working out of the fugal sections took place. In the first place, it seems most likely that Purcell was copying, not composing most of the works into his scorebook. We know that most of Fantasia 2 predates the copying of Lbl Add. 30930, since it also exists in an earlier, shorter version in London, British Library Add. MS 31435. Furthermore, certain corrections in the manuscript themselves seem to be the results of copying from an earlier source, which we must speculate is now lost. This is most obvious at the end of Fantasia 12 on fol. 58v, where Purcell apparently began to notate the final four bars of the two uppermost parts a bar early, only to realise his mistake when he began the tenor and bass, forcing him to scratch out and correct the treble and alto. Other corrections found in the manuscript are less likely to be directly linked to the copying process, but are nevertheless the kinds of changes that one would make on returning to a completed work and examining it afresh, such as the removal of consecutive fifths in bar 49 of Fantasia 7 (ten.).

With the sonatas the source situation is somewhat more unwieldy, since these works were widely copied in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The various manuscripts and editions were well scrutinised by Michael Tilmouth for the editions in Purcell's *Works*, however, and this information is summarised and consolidated once more in Shay and Thompson's *Purcell Manuscripts*. As with the fantasias, the resultant picture is of a small group of sources of strictly limited value in the examination of fugal processes. This is particularly true of the 1683 Sonatas, the autographs for which are all lost, and all early manuscript sources of which appear to derive directly from the published edition.²³ Manuscript annotations in the printed copies of the first edition, many of which were later incorporated into the second impression, indicate a similar attitude towards the 'final' text to that displayed in Purcell's corrections to minor details in Lbl Add. 30930, but none of these annotations is directly attributable to Purcell.²⁴

Even the 1697 Sonatas, of which several works survive in copies with major revisions and, in two cases, completely re-written movements, fail to supply any more information about the earlier stages of fugal composition. Here the printed versions of

²³ *PM*, pp. 124-25.

²⁴ See PS(r) 5, p. xv.

the sonatas are thought to derive from a manuscript, now lost, that contained different readings from the copies of 1697 Sonatas 1-3 and 7-10 preserved in Lbl Add. 30930.²⁵ In contrast to the works in which Purcell makes only minor revisions in the latter stages of copying, these few works that survive in substantially revised or variant forms (the central three movements of 1697 Sonata VII, and movement four of Sonata VIII) are obviously the result of re-composition rather than simple emendation of an existing text. The problem, however, is that rather than supplying additional information about compositional process, these sources simply preserve two alternative *finished* versions of these works.

Furthermore, it is not even possible to identify which of these versions, if any, Purcell would have considered definitive. The traditional assumption that the printed versions of these sonatas represented their final state has been challenged more recently by Christopher Hogwood, and it now seems likely that the versions preserved in Lbl Add. 30930, including the violinistic figuration introduced into the canzona from 1697 Sonata 7 and the attractive inversion of the subject in 1697 Sonata 8/iv represent a later text, not an original, superseded reading.²⁶ This argument rests heavily on stylistic grounds, however. In order to draw strong conclusions about the compositional aims behind such specific cases of revision, it is important to be able to identify with some certainty which version or versions of a work came first. Robert Shay's perceptive description of Purcell's concern to improve upon the imitative texture of certain sections of his Funeral Sentences (particularly 'Thou knowest, Lord') is successful for exactly this reason. Working with three sources of known relationship to one another, he is able to offer a strong interpretation of the development of the composer's compositional priorities: Purcell increasingly sought to elide the entries of imitative points more closely, and to ensure that they provided a harmonically explicit exordium by entering on the first and fifth degrees.²⁷ By contrast, the uncertain source history of the 1697 sonatas means that the revisions to Sonatas 7 and 8 cannot be placed within such a strong chronological sequence; indeed, the very importance of stylistic observations in the dating of the sources threatens to make any hypothesis concerning the evolution of Purcell's techniques

²⁵ All other sources of these works have been shown to derive either directly or indirectly from one of these sources; see the *stemma* in PS(r) 7, p. xii, and the discussion in *PM*, pp. 113-24.

²⁶ See Herissone, 'Purcell's Revisions', pp. 60-63.

²⁷ Shay, 'Purcell's Revisions to the Funeral Sentences Revisited', pp. 462-5.

self-fulfilling. This is all the more problematic since there is no reason to suppose that Purcell necessarily intended one version to replace another. As Robert Thompson points out, the corrections that Purcell made on pinned inserts in Lbl Add. 30930 were easily reversible, and it is easy to imagine him making the revisions to Sonatas 7 and 8 in response to the demands of a specific context.²⁸

Unfortunately the one statement that it is possible to make concerning Purcell's working methods in Lbl Add. 30930 results in something of a truism. Herissone's observation concerning Purcell's habit of notating the outer parts first and then returning to fill in the inner voices, adjusting the existing text where necessary, has a revealing exception in the copy of 1697 Sonata VII on fol. 34v., where changes in the colour of the ink show that Purcell was entering the music from the top part downwards.²⁹ The implication is that in genres where the inner parts were of equal importance with the treble and bass (and the trio sonata *a3* is one of the most emphatic examples of this) Purcell did not follow his usual pattern of working. In other genres the outer parts were sufficient if the intention was to notate his ideas quickly or to serve as an *aide memoire* until more complete texts were required for performance, at which point the inner voices could be fleshed out. The stricter fugal and contrapuntal textures of the sonatas, however, demanded full notation whatever purpose the copy was intended to serve, and the same is surely true to an even greater extent of the fantasias contained in the same manuscript.³⁰ Given this, there was no reason to notate the outer voices first and Purcell simply copied the music from the top downwards. In terms of composing, however, either model is equally inappropriate: in order to produce such an equal polyphonic texture Purcell must have been working in all voices concurrently. Exactly how he went about this, however, the manuscripts cannot reveal. For this reason, the examination of compositional process I have undertaken relies essentially on the final texts of works and is not based primarily on the examination of revisions made in the earliest sources.

²⁸ Thompson, 'Purcell's Great Autographs', pp. 15-16.

²⁹ See Herissone, 'Purcell's Revisions', p. 57 (note 22).

³⁰ Fresh examination of the manuscript revealed no further changes in ink colour within the fantasias or related pieces that could be used either to support or undermine this assumption.

PURCELL'S 'ART' OF DESCANT

Any analysis that attempts to explain Purcell's music by drawing inferences from the final texts of his works must begin from an idea, however hypothetical, of what it was that the composer was trying to achieve; of the techniques and stylistic elements that he valued in the music he encountered. Aside from the general characteristics of his own music, however, which as we have seen can result in somewhat variable accounts, glimpses of Purcell's attitude towards the process of composing and its artistic contexts are comparatively rare. We know from the preface to the 1683 Sonatas that Purcell admired the 'seriousness, and gravity' of Italian instrumental music, but these simple characterisations fall short of providing a basis for any real insight into his methods.³¹ They are, nevertheless, consistent with the only other source to preserve Purcell's thoughts on Italian instrumental music first hand, a brief comment in his compositional primer 'The Art of Descant'. Having described the various kinds of imitative polyphony in detail, Purcell places them in a practical context by associating them with the sonata, before offering a concise description of the qualities that he considered to constitute greatness in music:

Most of these different sorts of *Fugeing* are used in *Sonata's*, the chiefest Instrumental Musick now in request, where you will find *Double* and *Treble Fuges* also reverted and augmented in their *Canzona's*, with a great deal of Art mixed with good Air, which is the Perfection of a master.³²

'Art' is used here in the sense of 'artifice', implying skill and contrivance, qualities that Purcell clearly associated with the fugal devices that he had just demonstrated and which, when balanced with the melodic and harmonic principles of 'good Air', were to be considered the highest achievements of the composer.

This idea of musical artifice as a basic principle of Purcell's musical thought is crucial to the understanding of his instrumental music, and offers an alternative view of the status of fugal and imitative writing in his style as a whole: rather than markers of conservatism, these things demonstrate his interest in musical artifice. Indeed, if we posit this kind of artifice as a central tenet of his style, we can turn the whole idea of Purcell's conservatism on its head and suggest that the only reason he was interested in the music of older generations was because they offered a repository of such

³¹ See p. 43 above.

³² *AD*, p. 125.

techniques, and not because he was interested in reviving or sustaining an outdated style of composition *per se*. In Chapter 5 I will propose a context for this interest in compositional artifice in the wider concerns of Restoration artists and intellectuals, but for the time being I simply use it as a basis for the analysis of his music: once we take the demonstration of musical artifice as central to Purcell's compositional aims in both the sonatas and the fantasias, it soon becomes obvious that his handling of fugal devices has far more to reveal than simple stylistic affinity with other repertoires. Like any other object that is the product of human skill or contrivance, Purcell's works retain many markers that point to the ways in which they were made. In order to make these more accessible, I begin by looking at the approach to fugal artifice in Purcell's short compositional treatise in more detail.

'The Art of Descant' formed the third and last part of John Playford's *Introduction to the Skill of Musick* in its twelfth edition, published by Henry Playford in 1694. As in previous editions of the *Introduction*, the other sections covered the rudiments of music (part 1) and instructions for the playing of the bass viol and violin (part 2). The third part was the least consistent: absent from the first edition of 1654, it incorporated Thomas Campion's *Art of Setting, or Composing of Musick in Parts* (1655) with annotations by Christopher Simpson from the second edition (1655) onwards, until that was replaced in the tenth edition (1683) by Playford's own 'Brief Introduction to the Art of Descant'.³³

Purcell seems to have been enlisted as editor for the entire twelfth edition, but it was only 'The Art of Descant' that demanded extensive revision.³⁴ Beginning with the basics of consonant and dissonant intervals, it covers simple counterpoint, the correct handling of dissonances 'either [...] by way of Pass, or Binding', common cadence patterns and the principles of good voice-leading, before giving a detailed, note-by-note example of how to harmonise a given melody. There then follows a short passage treating the handling of keys and the proper cadences in a major and minor key, before Purcell begins a detailed discussion 'Of fuge, or Pointing'.³⁵ From this point onwards the treatise is completely new. His account of the various kinds of 'fuge' is

³³ For a detailed account of the successive editions of Playford's *Introduction*, see Herissone, *Music Theory*, pp. 8-10, and appendix C (pp. 251-70).

³⁴ Herissone, *Music Theory*, pp. 265-67.

³⁵ *AD*, pp. 85-106 *passim*.

comprehensive, and in general follows the pattern established by previous English writers on the subject, including Morley, Coprario and Simpson.³⁶

The value Purcell placed on the most artificial devices in his compositional armoury is demonstrated by the hierarchical arrangement of his account of fugal and canonic techniques. Beginning in two voices with simple 'fuge' and an explanation of the tonal answer, he continued with 'Imitation, or Reports' (a 'diminutive sort of fugeing' in which the bass should 'answer the *Treble* in some few notes as you find occasion'), before moving on to encompass 'Double Fuge', with two subjects, 'Fugeing *per arsin et thesin*' (by inversion), '*per augmentation [sic]*', '*recte et retro*' (retrograde), 'double descant' (invertible counterpoint) and finally canon, 'the noblest sort of Fugeing'. Each of these is illustrated with a passage constructed from the same subject or 'point', and the whole is then repeated for *fugeing* in three parts and then four.³⁷ The complexity of Purcell's examples, together with the brevity of his explanations (which are really just labels for the successive illustrations) reinforces the promotion of artifice by this hierarchical organisation: as Herissone notes, the examples resemble those of Bevin's *Briefe and Short Introduction* of 1631 in that they are far more successful as demonstrations of the author's skill than as usable pedagogical exemplars.³⁸

Purcell's examples of fugal technique may provide a wealth of useful vocabulary and technical information for the analysis of his instrumental music, but his treatise is even more revealing in its inconsistencies. The apparent coherence of his examples belies a remarkable discrepancy between Purcell's own illustrations and the style that he advocates as a model for aspiring composers, which is particularly apparent in his discussion of 'double descant' (what we would now call invertible counterpoint) in three parts on pages 122-24. His example is based on the same short, harmonically open point that he had used throughout the discussion of 'fuge', contrived such that it is triple-invertible and presented in three different permutations in order to demonstrate the suitability of each part to function as a bass (Fig. 2.1a). Aware of the difference between this kind of invertible counterpoint and that found in the Italian repertoire, however, Purcell inserted a second illustration, this time taken from 'the

³⁶ Herissone, *Music Theory*, pp. 194-205.

³⁷ *AD*, pp. 107-43 *passim*.

³⁸ Herissone, *Music Theory*, pp. 203-04.

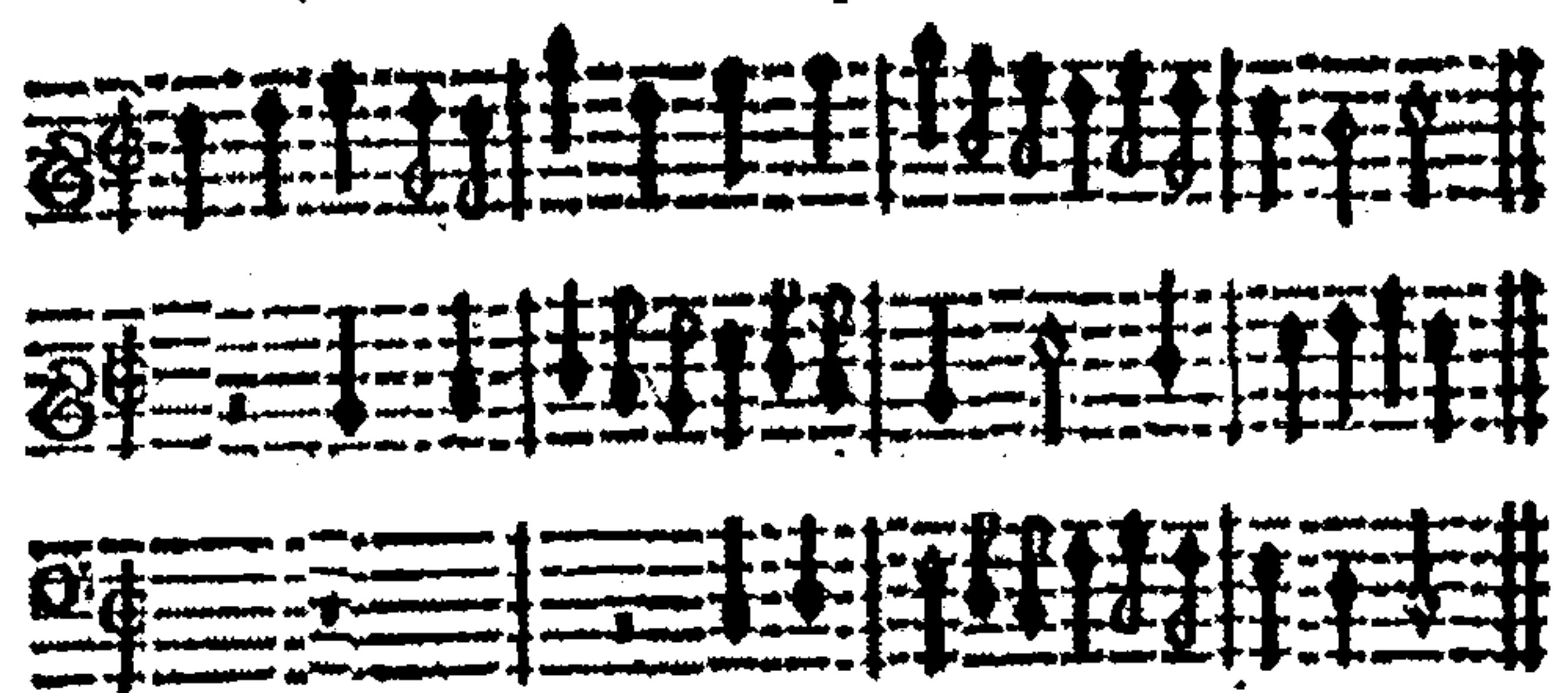
famous *Lelio Calista* [*sic*], an *Italian*' (Fig. 2.1b).³⁹ This new example employs two further discrete subjects alongside its main point, which is harmonically self-contained.

It is no surprise, given his reference elsewhere to the supremacy of the Italian sonata, to find Purcell quoting from an Italian composer, but the absence of any discussion of the differences between these two approaches cannot hide the resulting fissure in his contrapuntal theory. On the one hand, he apparently recommends the modern style, quoting from an Italian sonata and couching music examples in trio texture. On the other, he appeals to strict composition, quotes from an outdated Italian composer and devises examples that resemble fantasias more than sonatas. In attempting to provide a comprehensive overview of triple-invertible counterpoint in its practical application, Purcell has in fact confused the issue in much the same way

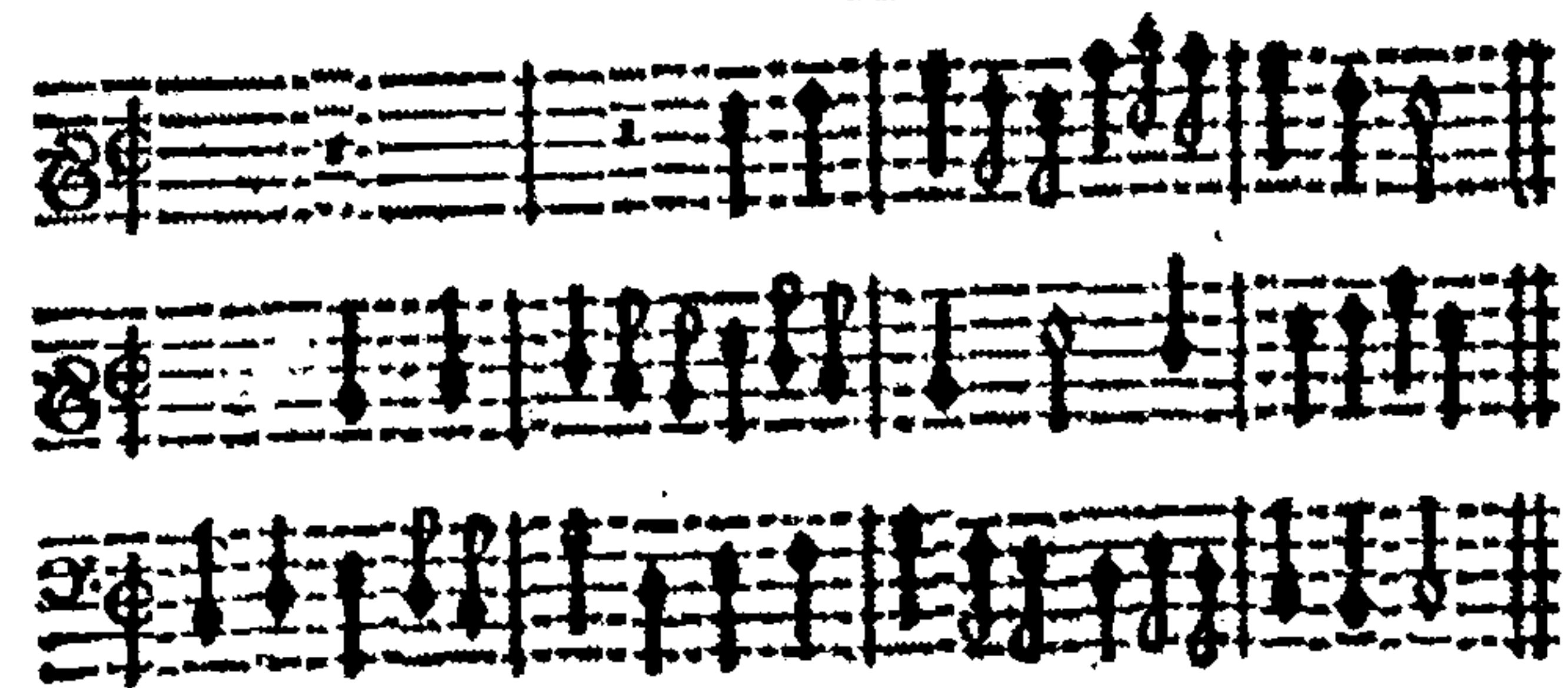
Fig. 2.1. Purcell, 'The Art of Descant', examples of 'double descant'.

(a) 'Double descant' in three parts (p.123).

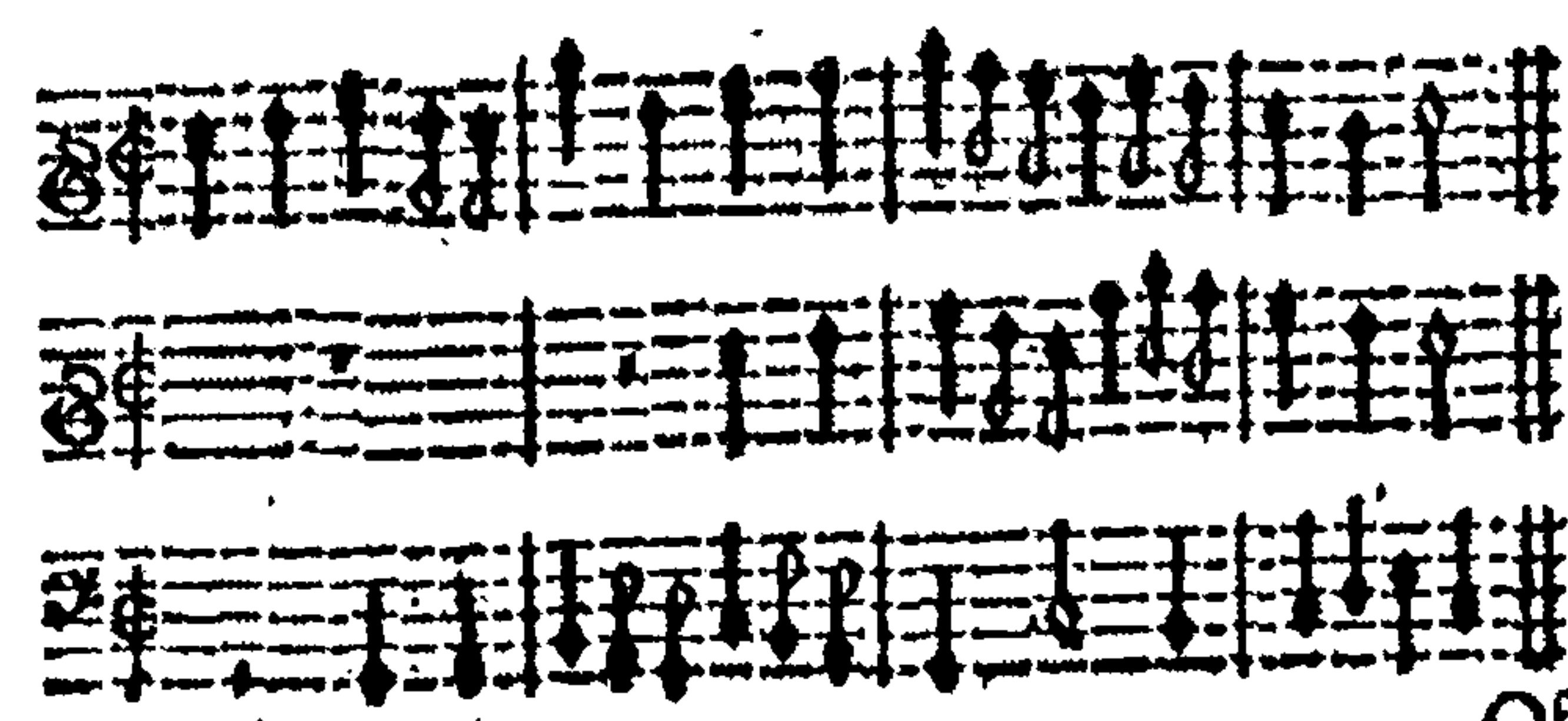
Example.



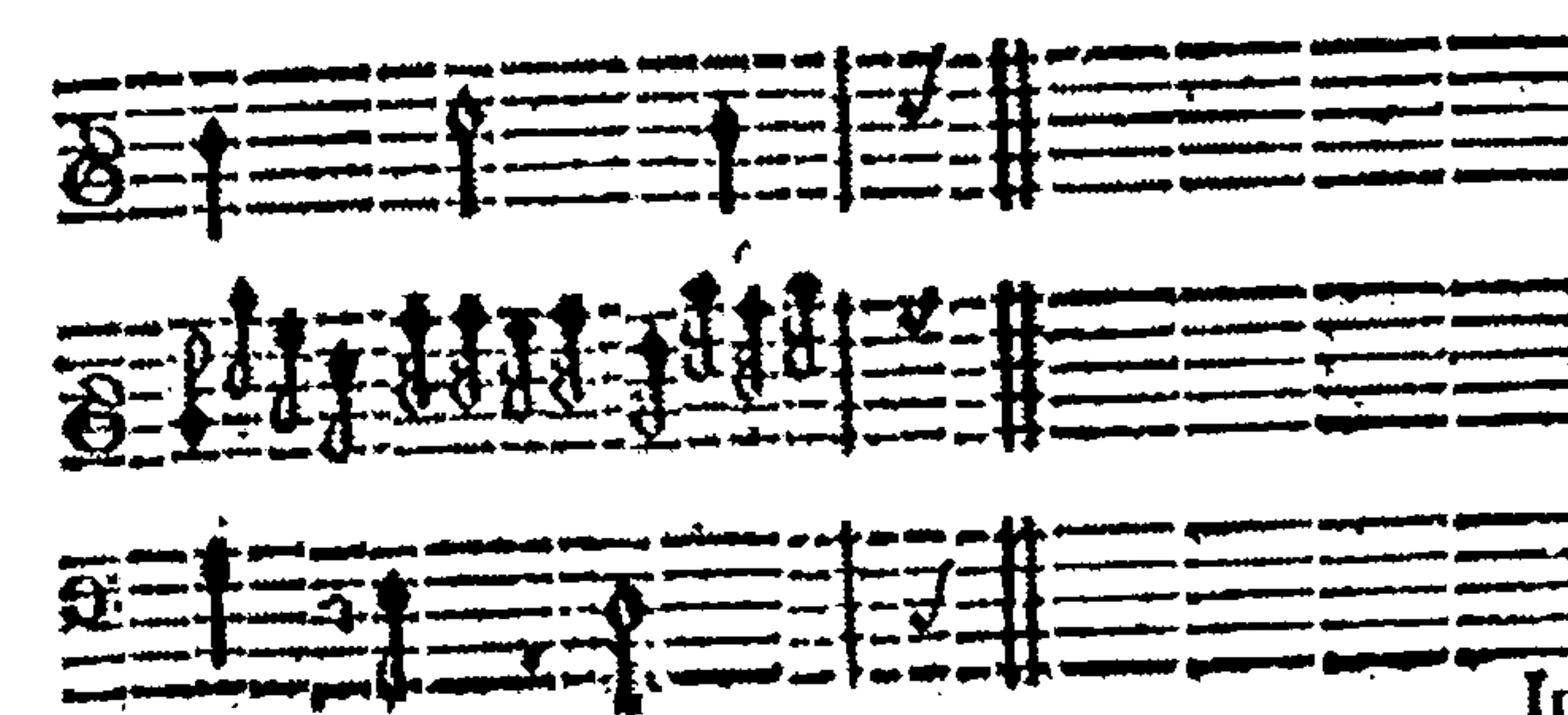
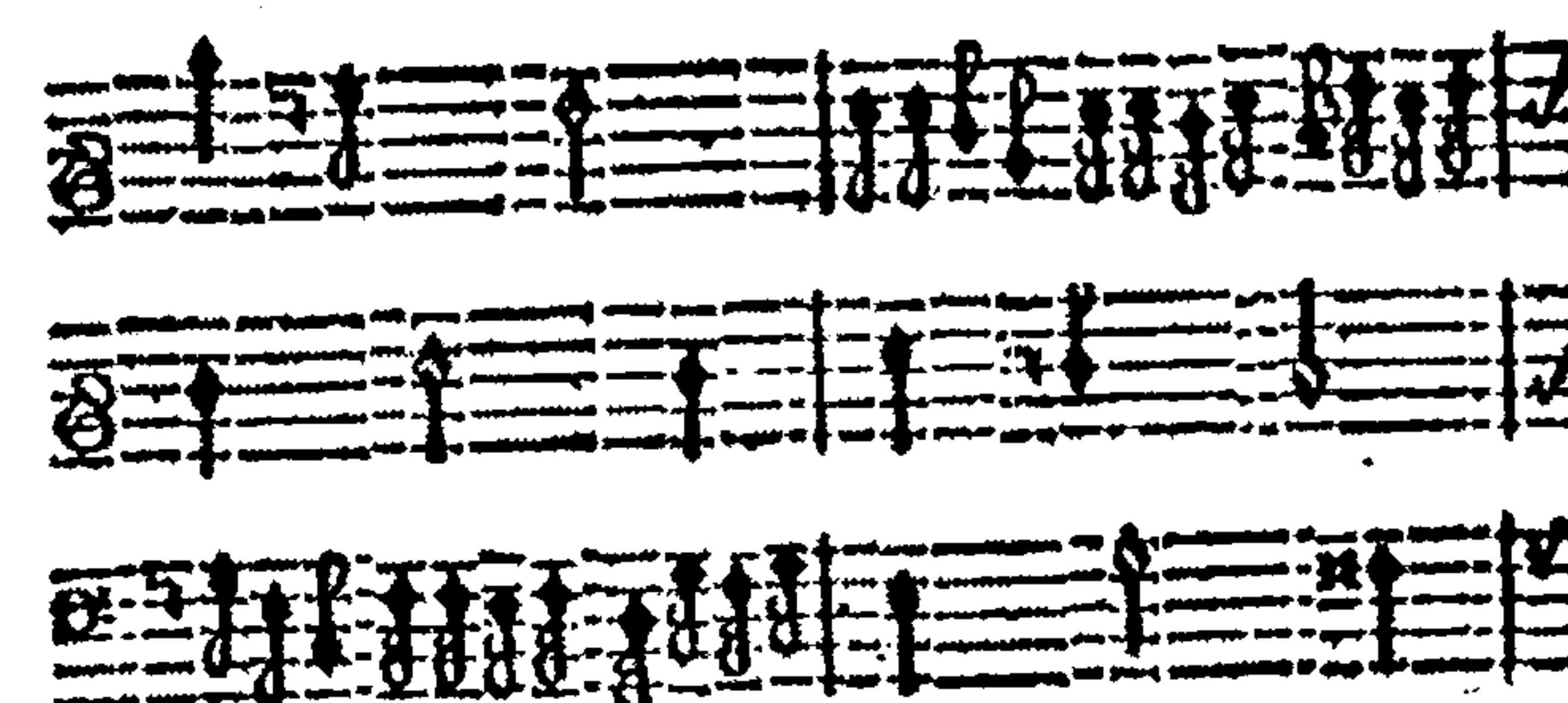
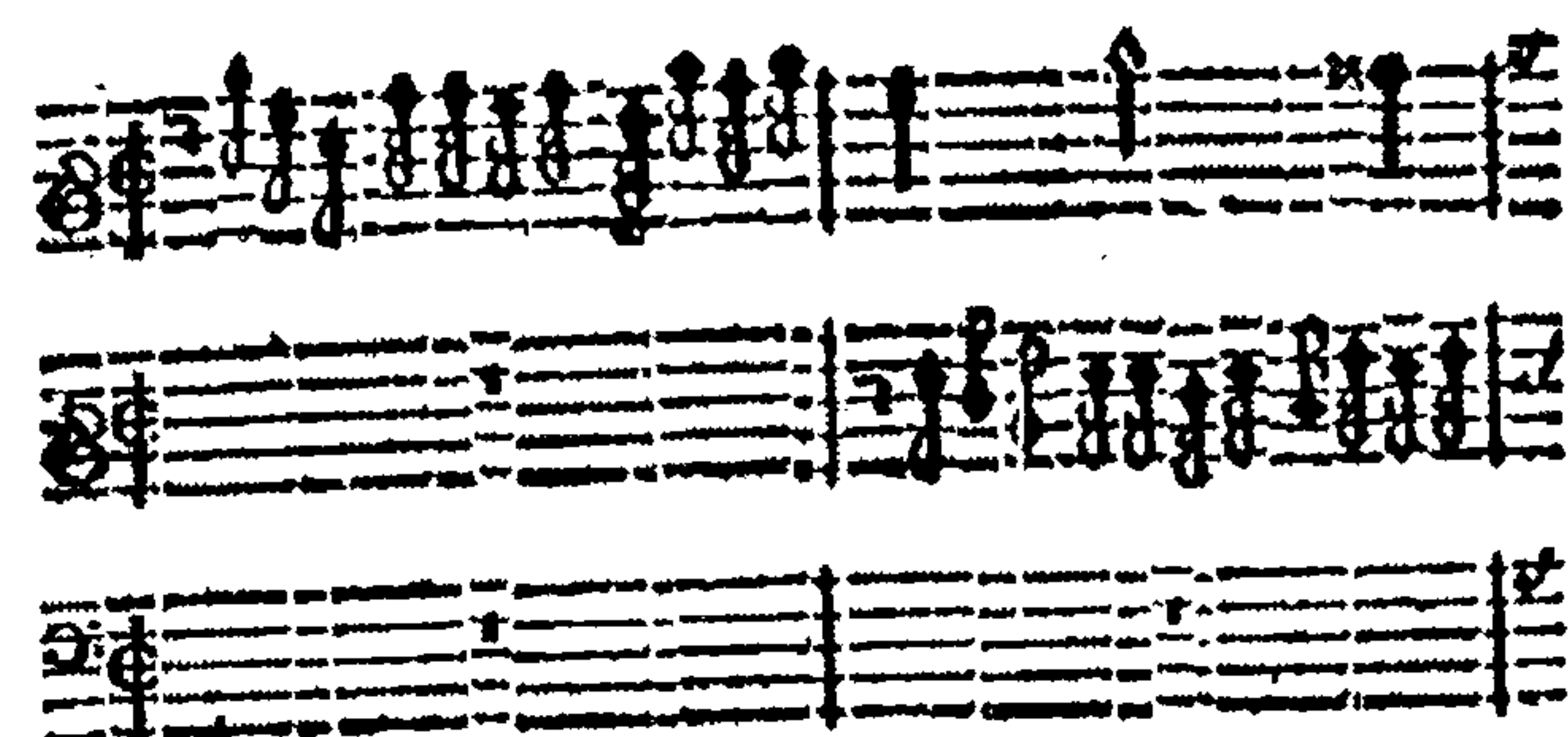
Reply I, *Where the Upper Part takes the Bass, and the Bass the Upper Part.*



Reply II. *Where the Second Treble takes the Bass, and the Bass the Second Treble.*



(b) Quotation from 'Lelio Calista' (p.124).



³⁹ Though Purcell, like Wessely-Kropik, confused Colista with Lonati; see Allsop, 'Problems of Ascription', pp. 34-44.

as would later writers on his music. Manfred Bukofzer, for example, seriously misrepresents the relationship between Purcell's works in the two genres by commenting:

The trio sonatas are divided into four or five contrasting movements and fall into the pattern of the church sonata of the Vitali type. On the other hand, the close bonds with the English fancy, which come to light in highly imitative movements, belatedly called canzonas, should not be overlooked.⁴⁰

Michael Tilmouth's article of a decade later represented a marked improvement on this confusion, by observing that the fugal procedure of Purcell's fantasias was most evident not among the canzonas, but in slow or moderately-paced imitative sonata movements like the opening movements of 1683 Sonatas 6 and 7.⁴¹ Far more than just a difference in technical approach, the distinction demonstrates two different ways of thinking about the whole ontological status of 'fuge' that can be observed in Purcell's treatise, one that comes down to the difference between understanding it as a technique, and as a genre.

The first two movements of 1683 Sonata 1 can provide a useful demonstration of this distinction, since they exhibit almost exactly the same contrast as Fig. 2.1. The first movement (Ex. 2.1 above) opens with a passage of simple 'fuge' in three voices, but later in the movement Purcell combines the subject with itself to produce a passage of 'double descant' (Ex. 2.4) constructed according to similar principles as Fig. 2.1a. This passage is used three times in succession (beginning at bb. 7⁴, 10² and 13²), although unlike the example in 'The Art of Descant' its invertibility is not fully demonstrated: the second entry (vln I in Ex. 2.4) is not heard in the bass at all. Purcell seems to have been more interested in using overlapping statements of the complex to create longer passages, and the permutations of the complex, together with its transposition, were subordinate to this concern. The second movement of the same

Ex. 2.4. 1683 Sonata 1/i: triple-invertible counterpoint or 'double descant'.



⁴⁰ Bukofzer, *Baroque Era*, p. 214.

⁴¹ Tilmouth, p. 111.

sonata, by contrast, is akin to the treatment of the subject in Purcell's 'Calista' example (Fig. 2.1b) despite the fact that it does not actually use three-part 'double descant' and has only one statement each of the subject and answer before altering the subject in order to modulate to the relative major. Indeed, Purcell's more abbreviated exposition in this movement is a direct result of the absence of triple-invertible counterpoint; otherwise, the principle is the same, with a harmonically closed subject forming a regularly recurring four-bar unit and existing alongside a recognisable counter-subject.

The kind of writing in Fig. 2.1a and Ex. 2.4 results from the imitative treatment of its subject according to the rules of triple-invertible counterpoint, and a different subject would require different intervals of time and pitch between entries. Here the term 'fuge' is understood as a technique, a conception that is nicely illustrated by Purcell's adoption of the verb 'to fuge' throughout 'The Art of Descant'. This apparent idiosyncrasy emphasises the active process of *fugeing* on the part of the composer, unlike the more conventional, and largely indiscriminate use of 'fuge' as a label for an imitative point or section of music constructed from that point.⁴² For this reason, I adopt Purcell's usage of *fugeing* to describe 'fuge' whenever it is to be understood as technique from this point onwards. In terms of modern analytical discourse, this is very similar to John Milsom's investigation of Renaissance *fuga*: it focusses attention away from the kind of vague observations about fugue as a stylistic marker in Purcell's music that I identify above, concentrating instead on what Purcell's fugal technique can tell us about how he composed.

The second conception of 'fuge', meanwhile, carries notions of genre: the kind of piece rather than the techniques it uses. The general characteristics of *fugeing* as a technique still apply here, but in combination with specific qualities of the fugal materials and the existence of a recognisable *a priori* formal principle. Fig. 2.1b, and 1683 Sonata 1/ii begin from fixed notions of the harmonic and rhythmic relationship between the parts, against which the melodic material has been contrived and into

⁴² See, for example, Simpson's *Compendium*, in which he uses the word 'fuge' for the point (e.g. pp. 104, 110), a fugal section (pp. 105, 110) and the relationship between parts ('in fuge'; p. 109), but never as a verb. The more familiar use of the word 'Fuging' is of course in connection with eighteenth-century psalm singing, particularly in North America (see Nicholas Temperley, 'The Origins of the Fuging Tune', *RMA Research Chronicle*, 17 (1981), pp. 1-32 *passim*). As far as I am aware there is no connection between this practice and Purcell's use of the word.

which any number of alternative sets of material might have been substituted without altering the basic plans of the passages. This formal principle should not be confused with the notion of fugue as a form, however. Instead, the term 'fugue' is used hereafter to refer to the notion of fugue as a genre, according to Laurence Dreyfus's understanding of the term in connection with the music of J. S. Bach.⁴³ Such an approach offers an attractive alternative to the kind of confused equivalence of categories like technique, form and genre, and to the unsatisfactory 'mould' theory of form cited earlier on.

The distinction between fugue as genre and as technique should not be confused, however, with that which is usually made between the techniques of fugue and imitation on the basis of interval and exactness of thematic restatement. The difference between *fuga*, defined as imitative counterpoint at the perfect intervals, and *imitatione*, used to denote imitative counterpoint on a less restricted basis, is commonly traced to Zarlino's description of these terms in *Le institutioni harmoniche*, despite the fact that, as Paul Walker has shown, Zarlino actually based his categories on the exactness of imitation, which ranged from what would today be called strict canon from beginning to end (Zarlino's *fuga legata*) to a freely contrapuntal texture incorporating brief and inexact melodic references between the parts (*imitatione sciolta*).⁴⁴ The linking of these terms with the presence or otherwise of imitation at the perfect intervals was a later generalisation on the part of Italian theorists based on Zarlino's observation that, according to his criteria of exactness, *fuga* would be possible only at the octave, or at the fourth or fifth (when correctly chosen according to the mode), whereas imitation at any other interval would necessitate changes to the interval species of the leading voice, thereby producing *imitatione*.⁴⁵

Such terminology does not map directly on to the difference between *fugeing* as technique and fugue as genre in 'The Art of Descant' or indeed in Purcell's music. Both of the examples of 'double descant' in Figure 2.1 can be described using the same term: if one privileges the presence of imitation at the perfect intervals they are both *fuga* (allowing for the tonal answer in the 'Calista' quotation), whereas if one applies the stricter criteria of Zarlino both are *imitatione*. Thus it is not possible to

⁴³ Dreyfus, *Patterns of Invention*, pp. 135-41.

⁴⁴ See Paul Mark Walker, *Theories of Fugue from the Age of Josquin to the Age of Bach* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000), pp. 9-12 and 63, and the summary on p. 348.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14, 55-6, 348.

differentiate between Purcell's two uses of the word 'fuge' on the basis of a conventional distinction between fugue and imitation.

Furthermore, it seems that the very distinction is of limited use in connection with Purcell's music, since he seems to have abandoned the binary terminology in favour of a single category of 'fuge' that privileged the perfect intervals but nevertheless acknowledged (if only implicitly) the possibility of imitation at other relative pitch levels. In one sense this resembles the common rejection of Zarlino's dual description by German authors since Calvisius (who had used the word 'fugue' indiscriminately for all imitative counterpoint), but it is important to note that Purcell did not simply ignore the issue.⁴⁶ In 'The Art of Descant' he advocated, in common with most other English theorists, a theoretical restriction of fugue to the perfect intervals by stating that 'A *fuge* is, when one part leads one, two, three, four, or more Notes, and the other repeats the same in the *Unison*, or such like in the *Octave*, a *fourth* or *fifth* above or below the Leading Part'.⁴⁷ For Zarlino the definition of *fuga* in opposition to *imitatione* had been an issue of nomenclature, derived from a certain degree of theoretical purism which in turn was one of the reasons why Calvisius rejected it as 'somewhat subtle'.⁴⁸ For Purcell, however, the theoretical restriction of 'fuge' to the perfect intervals was more of a practical response to the demands of modern instrumental music: the entry of the subject at these intervals kept it within the bounds of the key or 'air' of the music. In this respect he was in line with the similar advice offered by Butler, Simpson and Playford earlier in the century.⁴⁹

This more practical emphasis resulted in a degree of pragmatism that is evident not in the written portions of 'The Art of Descant', but in Purcell's illustrations, two of which incorporate fugal entries at imperfect intervals despite his description of 'fuge' referring only to imitative counterpoint at the octave, fourth or fifth. In the example of *Fugeing per Augmentation* [*sic*] in two voices there is a sequence of entries beginning in bar 4 in the order C *aug* (b.) – G (tr.) – B (tr.) – E (b.) – C (tr.), while in the example of *fugeing per arsin et thesin* in three voices the final three entries are *thesin* on C (b.) – *thesin* on D (tr. II) – *thesin* on G.⁵⁰ In both cases the entries at

⁴⁶ On German theorists see *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 349, 424.

⁴⁷ *AD*, p. 106.

⁴⁸ Walker, *Theories of Fugue*, p. 79.

⁴⁹ Herissone, *Music Theory*, p. 195.

⁵⁰ *AD*, pp. 111, 120.

irregular intervals can themselves be seen as part of a pair of entries at the lower fifth, but the transposition of this pair results in *fugeing* at the intervals of a second above, a third above and a third below, for which Purcell provides no alternative term.⁵¹

The transposition of the subject was of course a basic aspect of fugal composition, and explicitly recommended by Simpson in his *Compendium*.⁵² In Purcell's examples, though, the density of fugal entries meant that this transposition inevitably created counterpoint that seems to be at odds with his definition of 'fuge'. For this reason, it may be more sensible to treat Purcell's written description of fugue as equivalent to Simpson's advice about the appropriate keys for cadences in the course of a piece (see p. 104 below), which suggested a more restricted approach for the beginner while pointing out that experienced musicians were able to modulate to almost any key successfully. The restricting factor seems not to have been any theoretical insistence on the appropriate intervals for fugue, but the success or otherwise of the resulting music. Indeed, this had been recognised a century earlier by Morley when he wrote:

You must cause your fuge answere your leading parte either in the fifth, in the fourth, or in the eight, & so likewise every part to answer other, although this rule bee not general, yet is it the best manner of maintaining pointes, for those waies of bringing in of fuges in the third, sixth, and every such like cordes though they shew great sight yet are they unpleasant and seldome used.⁵³

For Purcell, by contrast, it seems that the converse reasoning could legitimise fugal entries at any interval, provided that the air of the music was not impaired. Zarlino's division of imitative counterpoint into *fuga* and *imitatione* is thus replaced with a continuum, beginning with *fugeing* at the perfect intervals, which is most common, and adding additional intervals in order to increase the range of possibilities for the use of the material.

As will become apparent in the analysis of Purcell's actual music below, this same continuum is very much in evidence in the fantasias and sonatas, and applies equally in the context of *fugeing* as a technique and fugue as genre. This is evident both at the level of individual pieces, and that of the group of works as a whole. Movements like 1683 Sonata 1/i mainly incorporate *fugeing* at the perfect intervals,

⁵¹ Purcell does in fact use the word 'imitation', but it is used in the specific context of adding a part to a pre-existent treble; see below, p. 120.

⁵² Simpson, *Compendium*, p. 111.

⁵³ Morley, *Introduction*, p. 155. Despite the apparent clarity of this passage Morley is typically inconsistent on this point, citing the sixth as a possible interval for fugal entries earlier on page 76.

but Purcell in fact transposes his subject to create pairs of entries that are not related to the key by perfect intervals, and introduces some complexes employing *fugeing* at imperfect intervals in order to increase the degree of fugal artifice. If one takes the fantasias as a group, most fugal sections again employ *fugeing* at the perfect intervals, but some draw on the full range of intervals, particularly where the perfect intervals offer only limited opportunities for fugal interlocks.

The canzonas and other sonata fugues, meanwhile, appear to be different in that their expositions rely exclusively on the alternation of entries on the first and fifth degrees of the scale. This observation is indeed one of the most important differences between the fugal techniques of the fantasias and sonata fugues, but it reflects a principle of formal expansion through repetition in the latter works, rather than a difference in the concept of *fugeing* itself. That is, the genre-based definition of fugue that applies to movements like the 'Calista' quotation (Fig. 2.1b) implies both 'fugeing' as a technique and the formal principle of periodic repetition through transposition to the fifth. After the exposition, however, *fugeing* may again occur at any interval and involve overlapping complexes, just as it does in the fantasia sections and sonata movements that rely on *fugeing* alone: most often involving perfect intervals, but incorporating *fugeing* at other intervals too (as in the last movement of 1683 Sonata 2, which incorporates complexes involving fugal entries at the second both above and below the leading part; bb. 135-38, 159-63).

THE STATUS OF FUGUE IN PURCELL'S MUSIC

Two fundamental aspects of the more recent analytical discourse surrounding Purcell's consort music threaten to undermine the potential conclusions of the approach I am proposing. Both are encountered in Martin Adams's *Henry Purcell*; far from being confined to Adams, however, they are closely related to wider issues concerning the basic assumptions of the analysis of seventeenth-century music.

Firstly, 'fuge' is understood as a foreground phenomenon, an assumption that coexists with an essentially teleological approach to harmony and tonality that is greatly problematic for the analysis of Purcell's chamber music and indeed his wider

œuvre. Such an approach can make Purcell's harmonic language appear archaic – even eccentric – by comparing it to a common practice that would not become the norm until at least fifty years later. Furthermore, this very common practice, and certainly its supposed 'evolution' from Renaissance principles of pitch organisation during the seventeenth century, are themselves questionable: the richness and variety available to Purcell in his 'pre-tonal' approach to harmony arguably illustrate the fallacy of the notion of 'progress' in the development of classical tonality.

Secondly, imitation and fugue in Purcell's music should not be considered agents of musical unity. The idea of unity as a basic criterion of musical worth is one that is almost ubiquitous in musical analysis, but nevertheless derives from historically contingent values predicated on much later musical styles.⁵⁴ It is also an idea that is common in Purcellian analysis, as for example in Tilmouth's identification of large-scale repetitions and reworkings of material in 1683 Sonatas 5 and 8, and his observations about the structures of sections of the fantasias: each 'a perfect unity in itself', in which 'extraneous material is rigorously excluded'.⁵⁵ Again, this idea implies that Purcell's *fugeing* exists at a foreground level that is hierarchically distinct from the underlying harmony, a conception that is fundamentally incompatible with my understanding of Purcell's compositional process: this is demonstrated, finally, by returning to the problem of analysing 1683 Sonata 1/i.

The Harmonic Context of fugeing

Adams's analysis of Purcell's Pavan (Z. 749) adopts a quasi-Schenkerian approach to harmony that privileges the notion of long-range structural projection of harmonies over the investigation of the mechanisms of *fugeing*:

Repetitions of the basic motif *a*, in prime and inversion, generate a series of overlapping voices which effect a gradual alteration in the function of the note E (*b*): it begins as a fifth above the tonic A, and ends as a locally-reinforced tonic [...] the crucial harmonic event occurs when A rises to a stressed B (b.12), setting up E as the goal of line *p*.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ For a summary of this problem, see Fred Everett Maus, 'Concepts of Musical Unity', in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: OUP, 2001), pp. 171-92 (pp. 173-74).

⁵⁵ Tilmouth, pp. 114-15, 111.

⁵⁶ Adams, pp. 91-92.

Although Adams does not use the words 'prolongation' or 'structural descent', his musical example makes clear his allusion to these phenomena (Ex. 2.5). In its own terms, the analysis is persuasive, but by adopting this approach he implicitly compares Purcell's handling of the harmony not with contemporary and local practice, but with the kind of tonality observed in later repertoires, largely by Schenkerian analysts: 'These contrapuntally-driven processes involve changes in pitch-emphasis in which harmonic movement plays a largely local role. This old-fashioned approach to harmonic practice plays a large part in producing these pieces' antique flavour. In the Pavan in A minor (Z. 749), the move from A minor to E minor takes place only at the very end of the first strain'.⁵⁷ Purcell's modulation may seem antiquated when compared with the carefully prepared and well established modulations of Bach's keyboard suites, for example, or even some of Corelli's chamber sonatas, but it is entirely compatible with the description of music 'in strains' given by Christopher Simpson and quoted above.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Adams's acknowledgement of the role of 'contrapuntally-driven processes' in this passage flags up a missed opportunity to examine the relationship between harmony and *fugeing* in more detail: the way the inverted entry on E in bar 4 (tr. II) initiates the first move towards E minor, for example, and the origins of the chromatic ascending line *m* in the imitation of this

Ex. 2.5. Adams's analysis of the Pavan (Z. 749).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

⁵⁸ See p. 77 above.

entry a bar later by the bass. Instead, Adams's emphasis on the projection of tonal implications in this passage relegates its motivic content to the status of a mere surface ornamentation.

Adams is not alone in applying principles derived from Schenkerian analysis to seventeenth-century repertoire. Christopher Wintle, in particular, has adapted similar principles to the analysis of Corelli's trio sonatas, based on his conviction that Corelli's compositional technique

is founded on a fairly limited number of musical figures or *models*, which are capable of sustaining a considerable variety of modes of presentation. These modes can be simply decorative, or alternatively they can have a deeper function of transforming or prolonging these models.⁵⁹

Wintle's analysis of Corelli in Schenkerian-derived terms works so well because, as he observes, 'Corelli's music is centrally, and directly, "about" cadential progressions, which Schenker described as "the primary means of coherence" in the structure of a tonal work'.⁶⁰ He is thus able to stress the importance in Corelli's music not of specifically melodic or motivic processes (though these are certainly important), but of the continual re-examination of the underlying 'tonal models' at the level of a deep middleground. The application of such a method to a wider seventeenth-century repertoire, however, is potentially problematic since, as Wintle observes, it is precisely because Corelli's music exhibits so many features that are recognisably tonal that Schenkerian analysis can be adapted and applied so easily in this case. Indeed, Wintle puts it even more strongly:

Schenker's theory, as has already been observed, was rooted chiefly in eighteenth-century theory: that every one of his most important concepts can be rediscovered in the music of the late seventeenth century, whose dissemination played so vital a part in establishing the *lingua franca* of the late Baroque, points to the fundamental historical importance of this music.⁶¹

Others have made similar observations about Corelli's music: for Dennis Libby, Corelli's 'tendency to systematization and self-limitation in his tonal and harmonic procedures [...] created the basis of his later historical standing as one of the "realizers" of tonality'.⁶² Wintle's specifically Schenkerian slant goes further,

⁵⁹ Christopher Wintle, 'Corelli's Tonal Models: The Trio Sonata Op. III, n.1', in *Nuovissimi Studi Corelliani III*, ed. Sergio Durante and Pierluigi Petrobelli (Florence: Olschki, 1982), pp. 29-69 (p. 31).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁶² Dennis Libby, 'Interrelationships in Corelli', *JAMS*, 26 (1973), 263-87 (p. 267). See also Allsop, *Corelli: New Orpheus of our Times* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), pp. 88-90.

however, by stating in no uncertain terms that Corelli's music assumes historical importance by virtue of its confirmation of Schenker's ideas. Perhaps even more pernicious is the converse: that those works with less in common with the later norms of tonality are less important as a result. If, therefore, we are to apply Schenkerian theory and related approaches to this Purcell, as Adams attempts to do, it can only be with a critical attitude towards its assumptions about historical and aesthetic value. It would be even better to recognise that Schenkerian analysis is not the only tool that offers access to the insights at which both Wintle and Adams arrive; an analysis based on more contemporary concepts like thoroughbass melodic division and indeed 'fuge' might serve just as well for Corelli and leave much more open the possibility of comparing his practice with that of other composers.

The problem with Adams's position that Purcell was old-fashioned in his approach to harmonic practice can be seen by comparing his music to the discussion of harmony in contemporary theory, and to Italian music. In some respects, Purcell was actually more 'modern' than his English predecessors and even some of his Italian contemporaries, whereas in others he seems more conservative. Not only does this mean that the common model of the evolution of tonality towards an idealised state in the eighteenth century is poorly applicable to Purcell's music, but it also calls into question the whole basis of that model: arguably, many aspects of the eventual dominance of tonality represented not progress, but a considerable loss.

Far from lagging behind their continental counterparts, the general consensus is that English music theorists were actually more progressive in their understanding of harmony during the seventeenth century.⁶³ For Jessie Ann Owens, this observation brings with it the danger of the kinds of anachronism identified above:

English music *sounds* tonal and English music theory uses concepts associated with tonality well before either happens on the continent. The consequence, however, of a preoccupation with tonality is that analyses of both music and theory can be anachronistic and dominated by teleological concerns. There is surprisingly little engagement of critical approach as a valid scholarly concern, nor have there been consistent attempts to derive a critical language from contemporary theory.⁶⁴

⁶³ See, for example, Christopher Orlo Lewis, 'Incipient Tonal Thought in Seventeenth-century English Theory', *Studies in Music, Canada*, 6 (1981), 24-47 *passim*.

⁶⁴ Jessie Ann Owens, 'Concepts of Pitch in English Music Theory, c. 1560-1640', in Judd (ed.), *Tonal Structures*, pp. 183-246 (p. 183).

One reason why it has been difficult to draw on contemporary theory in the way Owens has suggested is the promiscuity of seventeenth-century terminology for harmonic phenomena. Words like 'key', 'air', 'moode' and 'tone' were used by the same authors in widely varying contexts, to the extent that modern commentators have even called into question their competence.⁶⁵ While this may be fair in some instances, it does seem that contemporary use of these terms relied more on context than does modern tonal terminology: the absence of strict definitions of terms does not mean that they are unable to carry meaning.

For the purposes of this study I have sought something of a compromise between sensitivity to contemporary usage and comprehensibility for modern readers. Terms like 'tonic' and 'dominant', which imply particular tonal relationships, are generally avoided in favour of the contemporary practice of referring to a note or key by its interval above a given 'key note'. The practice of differentiating between the major and minor modes with reference to the quality of the third degree, however, carries potential confusion: what would have been called 'C *flat*' in contemporary terminology is therefore styled 'C minor'.

The very fact that this latter stance is viable is a significant observation about Purcell's harmonic practice, since the restriction of the available modes to just the major and minor scales was a decidedly modern phenomenon. This is one of the most obvious ways in which both English music theory in general, and Purcell in particular, were progressive when compared with continental authors. Christopher Simpson is clear about the existence of just two 'keys', 'either Flat, or Sharp, in respect of the lesser or greater Third taking its place above it [...] and so you may conceive of the Key, in any other place of the Scale'.⁶⁶ Purcell is even more emphatic in 'The Art of Descant':

There are but two *Keys* in Musick, viz. a *Flat*, and a *Sharp*; not in relation to the Place where the first or last Note in a Piece of Musick stands, but the *Thirds* above that Note. To distinguish your *Key* accordingly, you must examine whether the *Third* be *sharp* or *flat*, therefore the first *Keys* for a Learner to Compose in ought to be the two Natural *Keys*, which are *A re* and *C fa ut*, the first the lesser, the last the greater *Third*; from these all the other are formed, by adding either *Flats* or *Sharps*.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See, for example, Herissone, *Music Theory*, pp. 177-78. Herissone's survey of contemporary 'tonality' (pp. 174-93) demonstrates well the variety of terminology and usage in this area.

⁶⁶ Christopher Simpson, *The Division-Violist* (London: W. Godbid, 1659), p. 11.

⁶⁷ *AD*, p. 105.

In fact, much of the music Purcell was familiar with did not follow this restricted approach to mode. In Charles Butler's *Principles of Musick* (1636), which Jessie Ann Owens examines in detail, Butler describes six possible 'airs' named after the solmisation syllables on which the key note is placed.⁶⁸ These could be transposed by the same method that Purcell describes, the addition of a sharp (or removal of a flat) shifting the key note up a fifth, and the addition of a flat (removal of a sharp) having the opposite effect.

Butler's wider approach to the permissible modes on a given key note explains what are often cited as 'incomplete' key signatures in seventeenth-century music. The *SOL* air, for example, was a 'flat' key with a raised sixth, resulting in works notated with one fewer flat in the key signature than modern minor-key pieces. Matthew Locke's *Consort of Four Parts* of 1672 contains three such examples: Consorts 1 and 2 both have a key note of D, notated with no flats in the key signature, while Consort 5 has the key note G and is notated with one flat in the key signature.

Purcell's instrumental music, with few exceptions, follows the two-mode system he advocates in 'The Art of Descant' and not the earlier system of Butler. Indeed, not only is Purcell's system more 'modern' than Butler's (in terms of comparison to classical tonality), but it is also considerably more progressive than the system of 'Church Keys' or *tuoni* that Gregory Barnett has observed in the Italian sonata repertoire of the late seventeenth century.⁶⁹ As Table 2.1 shows, late seventeenth-century Italian practice is considerably *less* progressive than Butler's system of 'airs' of some 50 years earlier: the transpositional equivalence of many of the eight distinct *tuoni* (1 and 2 are the same, as are 3, 4 and the *tonus peregrinus*, and 5, 6 and 7) means that they can be represented using transpositions of just four of Butler's 'airs'.

Purcell's recognition of just two of these keys in 'The Art of Descant' (shaded in the table) is borne out by comparing Purcell's sonatas with the Italian repertoire examined by Barnett, as on the right hand side of Table 2.1. Over half of the minor-key works in the Italian repertoire employ the archaic *tuoni* 1 or 2 with their raised

⁶⁸ Charles Butler, *The Principles of Musick* (London: the author, 1636); see Owens, 'Pitch in English Music Theory', p. 226.

⁶⁹ Gregory Barnett, 'Modal Theory, Church Keys, and the Sonata at the End of the Seventeenth Century', *JAMS*, 51 (1998), 245-81 (pp. 245-281). The term originates with Joel Lester, who in turn translated it from Adriano Banchieri; see Joel Lester, 'The Recognition of Major and Minor Keys in German Theory: 1680-1730', *Journal of Music Theory*, 22 (1978), 65-103 (pp. 78-79).

Table 2.1. Equivalence of the *tuoni* and ‘airs’ identified by Barnett and Owens.

<i>Tuono</i> ⁷⁰	Final and key signature	‘Air’, ⁷¹	Occurrence in Italian repertoire ⁷⁰	Occurrence in Purcell’s sonatas
1	d –	<i>SOL</i>	23.5%	9%
2	g b	<i>SOL</i>		
3 & 4	a –	<i>RE</i> (<i>LA?</i>)	20%	45.5%
Tonus peregrinus	d b	<i>RE</i>		
5	C –	<i>FA</i>	38.5%	41%
6	F b	<i>FA</i>		
7	D ##	<i>FA</i>		
8	G –	<i>UT</i>	18%	4.5%

sixth, while about a third of major-key works are notated in *tuono* 8, with its flattened seventh. By contrast, Purcell’s two acknowledged keys account for over 85% of all of his sonatas, with just three works making use of the other ‘airs’. In each of these cases, Purcell seems to have chosen to base his key signature on an alternative ‘air’ in order to reduce the number of flats or sharps in the signature: 1683 Sonata 9 is in C minor with two flats in the signature, 1683 Sonata 10 in A major with two sharps, and 1683 Sonata 11 in F minor with three flats. It may also be significant that each ‘incomplete’ signature contains exactly the number of flats or sharps required to define the size of the third above the key note. For the record, there is no significant difference in this respect between Purcell’s sonatas and his fantasias and In nomines, with just three out of sixteen such works notated under ‘incomplete’ signatures (about 19%, compared to 14% in the sonatas). In this respect at least, the idea that Purcell’s harmonic practice lagged behind that of the Italian sonata composers is simply incorrect.

⁷⁰ Barnett, ‘Sonata’, p. 264. Barnett’s Italian repertoire is GM Bononcini’s op. 6, Corelli’s opp. 1-6 and Torelli’s opp. 1-6.
⁷¹ Owens, ‘Pitch in English Music Theory’, p. 226.

In other ways, though, Purcell seems more diffident towards the restrictions of classical tonality. In particular, the range of modulation in a typical sonata movement by Purcell is far wider than that of Corelli's sonatas, which is commonly restricted to the dominant, relative minor/major and subdominant. English theorists described the most appropriate keys for 'middle closes' or internal modulations just as did their continental counterparts, but at the same time they maintained a clear distinction between what was appropriate for beginners, and what a 'master' could achieve:

True it is, that a skilful Composer may (for variety) carry on his Musick, (sometimes) to *make a middle close or Cadence in any Key*; but here we are to instruct a Beginner, and to shew him what Closes or Cadences are most proper and natural to the Key in which the Song is set.⁷² [my emphasis]

Simpson may have been thinking of some of the experiments with enharmonic modulation in the consort music of the early seventeenth century, such as Alfonso Ferrabosco II's 'hexachord' fantasia in which the notes *ut – re – mi – fa – sol – la* are heard eight times, each time a semitone higher than the last, before the process is reversed and the hexachords played in descending order in the *secunda pars*.⁷³ Compared with this, the tonal circumscription of Italian music would have represented a considerable restriction of technique.

Purcell himself recommends 'the *fifth* above, and after that the *third* and *seventh* above' the key as appropriate for a piece in the minor mode, and for the major 'the *fifth* above, and [...] the *sixth* and *second* above'.⁷⁴ Like Simpson, however, he seems to be addressing the beginner earlier in the same passage; for once, this advice seems inadequate to explain the characteristics of his own works. An example from 1683 Sonata 1, this time the fourth movement, shows Purcell working within a much less restrictive conception of harmony than that implied by the Italian style. Firstly, Purcell answers his fugal subject not at the fifth, but at the fourth, despite the fact that the subject begins by outlining key-note harmony (Ex. 2.6). In the remainder of the movement he displays a remarkable freedom of modulation, with subject entries occurring in all in G minor, C minor, D minor, F minor, B♭ minor and A minor, and a further emphasis on E♭ major in bar 94 – in other words, stressing each of the seven degrees above the key note.

⁷² Simpson, p. 36.

⁷³ MB 81, pp. 1-22.

⁷⁴ AD, pp. 105-6.

Ex. 2.6. 1683 Sonata 1/iv, opening.

Presto 80

83

6 7 6

This unusual range of minor-key modulations results from the properties of the subject: each subject entry is transposed so as to preserve its intervallic structure exactly rather than making alterations for mode, with the result that the keys of F and B \flat are inflected in the minor rather than appearing as major keys according to Purcell's advice. In other words, Purcell's *fugeing* is able to account for his range of modulation far better than the restricted schemes of later classical tonality. This is exactly the kind of 'contrapuntally-driven' harmony that Adams recognised, but failed to take advantage of in his analysis of the Pavan, Z. 749.

Much of the harmonic content of Purcell's fugal movements relies on imitative processes, even when less unusual modulations are involved. The opening of 1683 Sonata 1/i shows how Purcell contrived fugal materials that could serve particular harmonic ends: the opening two-voice imitation cadences on G, but is answered in the following three bars by a different two-voice complex cadencing on D (Ex. 2.7a and b; compare Ex. 2.1 above). The two alternative complexes meant that Purcell could create a harmonic proposition by moving away from the key note to the fifth, in much the same way as he did in more homophonic movements like the third movement of the same sonata (Ex. 2.7c), but without the need for literal transposition of material.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ The harmonic 'proposition' (see Adams, pp. 29-30) set up by the repetition of material a fifth higher in movements like 1683 Sonata 1/iii results in an overall structure of A – A' – B, what Wessely-Kropik describes as the 'bar form' (WK, p. 111). This kind of structure is common in the slow movements of Purcell's Sonatas, as it is in the Italian repertoire that he is most likely to have known (Adams, pp. 29-30).

Ex. 2.7. Invention of fugal materials according to harmonic potential in 1683 Sonata 1/i.**(a) Opening two-voice complex.****(b) Further two-voice complex used in bb. 4-6.****(c) 1683 Sonata 1/iii.**

67 **Adagio**

71

75

b6 b4 6 5 6/5 #

b6 b6 6/5 5 6 7 6 # 7

Overall, the relationship between *fugeing* and harmony is one of ever-shifting priorities: imitation can create harmony just as harmony can make particular demands of imitation. For Purcell, the task was to know when to give free rein to his *fugeing*, and when to subordinate it to the harmony. This can be seen particularly well in his handling of the triple-invertible subject complex shown in Ex. 2.4 above, and in particular the extent to which the overlapping statements of the complex contribute to the harmonic content of the passage in bars 7-16 (Ex. 2.8). Purcell inserts an entry in the bass to overlap with the end of the first statement of the complex (i). He then uses this entry as the basis for a second statement of the invertible complex (ii); thus the

harmonic turn towards C minor is a direct result of the desire for the closest possible imitation. With the third statement of the complex, however, the priorities have altered somewhat: rather than continue pushing flatwards by inserting yet another close imitation, Purcell delays the next entry until the second beat of bar 13. Statement (iii) is therefore a fifth *higher* than (i), reining in the harmony towards D minor and eventually G minor. In the process, Purcell is obliged to make a minor alteration to the end of the subject (vln II, b. 13); in this case, harmonic necessity overrides the possibility of more artificial imitation.

Ex. 2.8. 1683 Sonata 1/i, bb. 7-6 (triple-invertible complexes shaded).

Unity and Fugeing

The problem with the notion of fugue as an agent of musical unity or ‘motivic economy’ in Purcell’s music is made particularly obvious when contrasted with the kind of reciprocal relationship between *fugeing* and harmony that I have proposed. ‘Thematic concentration’ becomes an agent of unity only in a context, such as the later works of the Classical and Romantic composers, in which musicians seek to unify a structure that otherwise threatened incoherence, owing to the hierarchical separation between harmony and surface motivic elements. It would be nonsense to point to the ‘motivic economy’ of 1683 Sonata 1/i as a deliberately unifying element in the music, since the whole movement is predicated on the long-range projection of the imitative possibilities of the material: harmony and *fugeing* are mutually inclusive.

Nevertheless, the idea that Purcell’s fugal technique was designed to impart unity to his music is an enduring one; as we have seen, it is important in Tilmouth’s article on the chamber music, and finds a new lease of life in Adams’s *Henry Purcell*. In part this is due to the mode of reception identified in Chapter 1, that sought to identify Purcell’s consort music with emerging characteristics of later chamber music. In a

more immediate context, however, the issue of musical unity has been an important concern in other studies of seventeenth-century English instrumental music, and in particular, Oliver Neighbour's influential study of *The Consort and Keyboard Music of William Byrd*.⁷⁶ Neighbour's highly sensitive analysis reveals a profound understanding of Byrd's music; at the same time, it is heavily grounded in later notions of autonomous instrumental music, and in particular the importance of motivic coherence and unity. One of the first priorities of an approach that seeks to understand such works in the context of a more historically informed analysis of compositional process, therefore, might be to examine the relevance of such notions to this much earlier repertoire.

From the outset, Neighbour holds that the most important single factor in the development of Byrd's instrumental technique is the absence of a text. This explains the importance of the *cantus firmus* to sixteenth-century instrumental music: 'There was a growing feeling that textless polyphony offered a new range of possibilities to the composer, but the problems of building sizeable pieces without the aid of words were intensified by the difficulty of finding a pretext for tackling them'.⁷⁷ In even more general terms, indeed, Neighbour understands Byrd's instrumental style to arise from a prolonged engagement with these issues:

No composer, whether English or continental, working without the guidance of a sung text, had hitherto encompassed so wide a range of character or of structural invention [...] He recognized the problems of abstract musical construction that faced him, thought about them deeply, and never tired of devising new ways of meeting them.⁷⁸

By basing his analyses on this premise, Neighbour situates his work in a well-defined historical context in which a particular set of circumstances (the increasing popularity of untexted polyphony) creates a specific compositional problem (the absence of text with which to structure a work): consequently his analysis seems highly appropriate to the music it seeks to explain. On the other hand, the details of Neighbour's analysis rely heavily on the almost ubiquitous paradigm of unity-within-variety, both as a basic assumption of the goal of musical analysis in all repertoires, and also as an important criterion (whether or not it was explicitly stated as such) for

⁷⁶ Oliver Neighbour, *The Consort and Keyboard Music of William Byrd* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

the aesthetic judgment of individual pieces of music. As a result, Neighbour's decision to focus on the structural elements of Byrd's technique, even if it is ultimately found to be revealing, may reflect his own ideas about the aesthetic importance of musical unity as much as it tells us about the particular characteristics of Byrd's instrumental music.

One of Neighbour's more detailed analyses is that of the second Fantasia a6. The discussion starts from the premise that Byrd was attempting in this fantasia to emulate the 'far greater restlessness' of his keyboard music, 'encompass[ing] the widest possible range of character'; Neighbour contrasts this with his understanding of Byrd's technique elsewhere in the consort music, according to which 'Byrd cultivates the unity of mood that textless polyphony encourages'.⁷⁹ In order to understand this contrast it must be borne in mind that, perhaps more than any other consort piece of Byrd's, this piece is unequivocally sectional, incorporating not only imitative writing, but also a quotation and variation from a popular song (*Greensleeves*) and an otherwise self-contained Galliard. From the start of his commentary on this piece, therefore, Neighbour feels the need to explain its apparent discontinuity of structure. Elsewhere, however, it becomes clear that the use of contrast is more than just a means to achieve character and expression. By dividing his structures into shorter sections, Byrd was able to compose longer works, since the resulting contrast avoided the danger of tedium in an extended imitative section:

The flow of imitative counterpoint favoured on the continent [...] could be prolonged almost indefinitely. Byrd preferred firmer modelling based on a balance of contrasts. The larger the structure, the more boldly its proportions needed to be thrown into relief. Since the strongest contrasts required textural variety he employed five or six parts for all his longer pieces.⁸⁰

This division of the music into contrasting sections is crucial to Neighbour's understanding of Byrd's technique; indeed, it goes far deeper than the large-scale divisions that he proposes. Neighbour is concerned to show how the 'flow' of the music is regulated by divisions into sections at all levels, such that a fully developed hierarchical system of metrical organisation can be read into his analysis, from the division into two main sections (the first imitative, the second being the Galliard), through the planning of the imitative first section into six different 'phases', right

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

down to the imitative subjects themselves, which assume the function of metrical units due to their 'melodic primacy' (in other words, Neighbour understands Byrd's imitations as ways of dividing time as much as ways of relating the parts to one another and building vertical harmonies).

It is here that the 'unity in variety' paradigm comes to the fore. Neighbour's division of the fantasia into clearly defined sections leaves him anxious to forestall any charges of discontinuity in Byrd's structure, leading him to propose an intricate series of relationships that cut across these sectional divisions. Initially this tendency manifests itself in the form of platitudes, that receive no further explanation: the subject's 'elegaic quality, though often modified or contradicted, plays a unifying role in the work'.⁸¹ Later on, however, he becomes more explicit, particularly in connection with the six 'phases' of the first section:

As the contrasts between the successive phases become more extreme Byrd secures their coherence through two sequences of cross-references. In the first place he connects each phase loosely to the last with an answering rhythm or motive. Thus the melody in phase 4 closes with syncopations echoing phase 3, and is itself recalled by a sudden outcrop of fauxbourdon in phase 5 (bar 81), whilst melodic fragments in phase 5 prepare for *Greensleeves* and its free continuation in phase 6. At the same time he evidently planned phases 1-3 and 4-6 as parallel cycles, on the principle that he often employed in variation works. The flowing conjunct crotchets of phase 4 relate to phase 1, the antiphony of phase 5 echoes that of phase 2, and phases 3 and 6, though unrelated, each bring an unexpected turn of events. And just as in the *Browning* he guards against a possible break between variations 11-15 and 16-20 by transposing the melody in var. 15, he closes phase 3 of the fantasia, not in the tonic like all the others, but in the subdominant.⁸²

Neighbour's first series of 'cross-references' essentially corresponds with the idea of motivic similarity between successive sections and points of imitation that are so common in analyses of consort music. His language is, however, revealingly non-committal, as exemplified in the passage quoted above: Byrd 'connects each phase *loosely* to the last with an *answering rhythm or motive*' [my emphasis]. The more pressing question is actually not whether such similarities exist in the music (the syncopated rhythms of phases 4 and 3 are clearly related, as are the melodic fragments in 5 and 6; the relationship of the 'sudden outcrop of fauxbourdon' to phase 3 seems more tenuous to me), but whether they can be considered as a deliberate attempt on the part of Byrd to 'secure the coherence' of the successive phrases. Such an argument seems logical if one considers the structure to be disjointed, as Neighbour evidently

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 81-2.

does, but the same resemblances could just as logically have arisen through the persistence of earlier material in Byrd's mind as he invented new material for successive phases, particularly in this case where, as Neighbour observes, these resemblances are principally between adjacent phases.

The second of Neighbour's 'cross-references' concerns the grouping of phases 1-6 into two 'cycles', but the very generality of the observations on which this is based serves to demonstrate that the grounds for this observation are even weaker, particularly in the case of any link between phases 3 and 6, which he is forced to admit are unrelated. Despite such problems in his argument, however, the more detailed passages of his analysis are persuasive and insightful. For the present purpose it is simply important to bring to attention some of the assumptions on which Neighbour's readings are based, often without explicit acknowledgement in the text. In this case, his desire to show structural unity leads him to propose a symmetry that is at best only one of several possible interpretations; an equally valid alternative could have emphasised the continuity of phases 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 and 6 as pairs, each pair representing a marked contrast with its predecessor.

Martin Adams frequently applies similar principles in his *Henry Purcell: The Origins and Development of his Musical Style*. Like Neighbour, he identifies motivic links between sections of a work as unifying agents; a good example is his observation about the relationship between the successive sections of Purcell's Fantasia 7 (Z. 738), summarised in Ex. 2.9. Here, though, the correspondences between sections are if anything less convincing than Neighbour's: vague similarities of melodic contour are taken out of harmonic and metrical context, and even if one acknowledges them it is not difficult to imagine them arising subconsciously. The idea, therefore, that they represent an effort to unify the whole is significantly weakened. Even more importantly, it is by no means certain that such techniques, even if we accept them as consciously applied, need necessarily result from a desire for unity. The re-use of old material in a new context could simply be designed to show compositional skill by introducing diversity and contrast. What is needed, therefore, is an analytic approach that focuses on demonstrable compositional actions that make sense within an appropriate historical setting.

Adams's application of the importance of such motivic unity to individual passages of imitation raises further questions concerning Purcell's compositional

Ex. 2.9. Fantasia 7: Adams's analysis of motivic relationships between sections.⁸³

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

priorities. Like Tilmouth, Adams allies fugal composition to the idea of ‘motivic economy’ as an ideal designed to ensure continuity and musical unity on the surface. He refers to ‘extreme economy in thematic material’ in the pavans and three-part fantasias, and to the ‘large-scale organicism so prominent in the fantasias’ and some sonata movements.⁸⁴ He is then able to postulate this ‘motivic economy’ as something that concerned Purcell throughout his career, observing it in later examples of songs and dance movements where the category seems more appropriate; indeed, it seems Adams’s desire to explain the extreme concentration of Purcell’s mature style has a strong influence on his approach to the earlier, contrapuntal genres.⁸⁵

⁸³ Adams, p. 104.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 36 respectively.

⁸⁵ See, for example, his discussion of *Bonduca* (Z. 574): *Ibid.*, 337. A similar observation was made by Rebecca Herissone in her review of Adams’s book for the journal *Early Music History*, 15 (1996), pp. 270-276 (p. 273): ‘Some of his most important contributions to our understanding of Purcell’s music are his ideas on small- and large-scale repetition in the early works, the decreasing use of literal motivic repetition in the later music, and the suggestion that Purcell’s vocal technique derived in its seminal years from the instrumental’.

Apart from the fact that this association of contrapuntal procedures to the phenomenon of 'motivic economy' prevents Adams from exploring in greater detail the mechanisms of Purcell's counterpoint, the biggest problem with his approach is that it imputes to Purcell an aesthetic value that is arguably more appropriate to the analysis of Beethoven than to that of Purcell. Thus even when, in approaching his analysis of the opening of Fantasia 7, he questions the notion of 'motivic economy', the notion of unity itself remains the principal arbiter of aesthetic judgement:

It is common to refer to the thematic concentration and technical virtuosity of the fantasias as a unifying agent. This is a dangerously limited view: firstly it suggests that by increasing thematic concentration a piece is inevitably more unified; secondly, and perhaps more disturbingly, it suggests that this is the most significant level of unity. Its inadequacy is clearly shown by fantasia No. 7 (Z. 738), in which thematic concentration is secondary to the tensional patterns generated around pungent false relations produced by linear thinking and developed out of the opening idea.⁸⁶

Even if it does seem to us that 'thematic concentration', 'motivic economy' or even 'tensional patterns generated around pungent false relations' impart unity, it does not follow that this is the most important reasoning behind this characteristic of the music.

Not only can the category of unity lead to the proposition of unconvincing structural connections between passages, therefore, but also, like some of the forms that underpin the methods of formal analysis, it is anachronistic in the intentions it imputes to the composer. Because of this, it is often allied to other ideas that seem more appropriate to the context of seventeenth-century musical practice, like (in Adams's case) imitative technique, a move that seems to situate it more firmly in the contemporary understandings of music, but in reality can serve simply to divert attention from other phenomena, like the detailed study of Purcell's *fugeing*, that could potentially provide more penetrating methods of analysis.

Some of the possible insights afforded by Purcell's approach to *fugeing* have already been encountered in the foregoing discussion of 1683 Sonata 1/i. When gathered together, they provide the best demonstration so far of Purcell's concern to find the most artificial combinations of his material possible, or as he put it in 'The Art of Descant', the 'noblest' expressions of his art. In Ex. 2.7 I observed that Purcell's subject material was contrived so as to support two different harmonic functions depending on the way it was combined with itself. In fact, almost all the

⁸⁶ Adams, p. 100.

material used in the movement is related to one of a number of similar two-voice subject complexes, usually involving imitation at the unison or octave, fourth or fifth. These complexes are given, in rhythmically simplified form, in Ex. 2.10a, together with written sigla describing the imitation they embody.⁸⁷

This exhaustive collection of canons (no other two-voice complexes can be constructed using the conventional intervals of imitation without displacing the entries metrically) strongly suggests that Purcell deliberately sought out the imitative possibilities of his material before beginning the composition of the work proper. When these materials are taken and arranged as they appear in the final form of the movement, it is possible to see how Purcell used them in order to build larger textures and longer passages of music. Ex. 2.10b shows the distribution of these two-voice complexes in 1683 Sonata I/i. The crossed noteheads indicate notes that Purcell altered or omitted in the final form of the movement; such changes could be prompted by a need for fuller harmony in places where the original note would have doubled a note from another part (as in b. 12, vln I), or sometimes by the desire to introduce a subject entry that would otherwise cause an unusable dissonance, as in bar 13.

Ex. 2.10. 1683 Sonata I/i, imitative materials.

(a) Two-voice subject complexes.

The image displays five musical staves, labeled A through E, each showing a two-voice subject complex. The staves are written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are simplified, focusing on the pitch and rhythm of the subject and its imitative response. Above each staff is a sigla indicating the interval and time displacement of the imitation: A: S^{+5, d}; B: S^o; C: S^{+4, o}; D: S^o; E: S^{+5, o}. The notes are connected by stems, and some notes have crossed heads, indicating alterations or omissions in the final form of the movement.

⁸⁷ These sigla will be used henceforth in order to describe the imitative combination of a subject with itself. 'S' stands for 'subject', while the superscript characters indicate the intervals of pitch and time between the two entries. Laurence Dreyfus adopts a similar system of describing fugal complexes in *Patterns of Invention*, pp. 147-52.

(b) 'Skeleton score', showing distribution of two-voice imitative complexes.⁸⁸

Ex. 2.10b makes obvious how the triple-invertible passage from Ex. 2.4 above (marked 'X' here) combines interlocks A and C, and we have already seen how the successive statements of this 'double descant' contributed to the harmonic content of the movement (Ex. 2.8). When viewed within Ex. 2.10b, however, complex 'X' is revealed as just one of a number of three-part interlocks that formed part of Purcell's composition of this work. Again the impetus seems to have been to make the imitation more artificial. Since 'X' involved imitation at the minim followed by a further entry a semibreve later, it would have been logical to look for another combination of parts in which the entries could follow one another in successive minims: as Coprario had written earlier in the century, 'to sooner [*sic*] you bring in your parts with the fuge, to more better will it shewe'.⁸⁹

Although the analysis of the three-part complex 'X' as the combination of interlocks A and C suggests a simple additive approach to the derivation of larger

⁸⁸ Both Dreyfus and Milsom use similar pared-down scores in order to display imitative materials; see, for example, Dreyfus, *Patterns of Invention*, p. 151. Milsom similarly uses labelled arrows to indicate particular complexes as I have done; see 'Absorbing Lassus', p. 317.

⁸⁹ John Coprario, *Rules How to Compose* [Huntingdon Library, California, MS EL6863, c. 1610-14], ed. Manfred F. Bukofzer, facs. edn (Los Angeles: Gottlieb, 1952), fol. 36^v.

fugal complexes, in reality the process is rather more complicated. The mere fact that a two-part complex is viable does not, of course, make it any more (or less) likely that that interlock is compatible with any other two-voice combination. Rather the separation of such larger complexes into their component two-voice interlocks facilitates the analysis of the kinds of decisions Purcell was obliged to consider when dealing with combinations of the same material in more than two voices. A good example can be seen in bars 14-17 of Ex. 2.10b. Here, a statement of two-part complex B in the bass and second violin is joined to a further subject entry in the first violin, which would have formed interlock A with the bass. As the crossed noteheads show, however, this entry was incompatible with the second violin beyond its third note, and Purcell was therefore forced to abandon it (the final form of this passage can be seen in Ex. 2.1).

Purcell was nevertheless able to produce a more successful three-part complex involving imitation on successive minims, as shown in the boxed passage in Ex. 2.10b. In order to do so, he resorted to the introduction of an entry that did not follow the restriction of imitation to the unison or octave, fourth or fifth observed elsewhere in the movement (the entry marked with an asterisk in b. 5). Even this was not straightforward, however, since this new complex, involving imitation at the second with the first violin, itself had voice-leading problems. The process by which Purcell might have composed this passage is shown in Ex. 2.11: at stage (b), he removes the last note of the new complex in order to avoid the sounding of a suspension against its resolution.

Purcell's search for the most artificial three-part interlock therefore explains what would otherwise be an anomaly in this piece, the inclusion of a fugal entry involving imitation at the second rather than the more conventional intervals. Having used this combination once, however, Purcell seems to have considered it part of his pool of fugal materials just as were the other complexes from Ex. 2.10a, since this same imitation appears between the bass and second violin later in the movement (b. 17, again marked with an asterisk). Such analysis shows that the use of Purcell's approach to *fugeing* as a window onto his compositional technique need not degenerate into what Adams disparages as a 'dreary catalogue of contrapuntal devices'.⁹⁰ The

⁹⁰ Adams, p. 99.

Ex. 2.11. 1683 Sonata 1/i: derivation of bb. 4-6.

a) Two-voice subject complexes

[B]

b) Correction of unviable complex

[C]

[S+2, d]

c) Combination of two-voice complexes into one three-voice complex

8va

Vln I

Vln II

Bass B.C.

6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

The diagram illustrates the derivation of measures 4-6 from two-voice subject complexes. It features three main staves: Violin I (Vln I), Violin II (Vln II), and Bass/Bassoon (Bass B.C.). The process is shown in three stages: a) Two-voice subject complexes, where two separate melodic lines are identified; b) Correction of unviable complex, where a specific complex is marked for correction; and c) Combination of two-voice complexes into one three-voice complex, where the corrected lines are combined into a single three-voice complex. The final score shows the resulting three-voice complex across the three staves, with a sequence of notes (6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) written below the Bass staff.

association of counterpoint with empty scholasticism is hardly surprising when Purcell's imitative technique is not understood as the central feature of his style: for Adams it is simply a surface phenomenon, divorced from the expressive heart of the music which resides in the underlying harmony. As these brief comments on 1683 Sonata 1/i demonstrate, however, Purcell's fugal technique not only illuminates his compositional priorities in the promotion of artifice, but also offers an insight into the ways in which he achieved this and into how his music is put together at the most detailed level.

CHAPTER 3

Fugeing and Fantasia

‘ALL HIS ART AND INVENTION’

Despite Purcell’s stress on the pre-eminence of the sonata in ‘The Art of Descant’, there is considerable justification for reading the 1694 treatise as equally representative of his fantasias and In nomines. As we saw in Chapter 2, most of Purcell’s virtuosic examples of the different kinds of *fugeing* in the treatise have more in common with his fantasias than with the Italian repertoire he commends. Moreover, the very wording of this recommendation – ‘Most of these different sorts of *Fugeing* are used in *Sonata*’s, the chiefest Instrumental Musick now in request’ – inherently implies that fugal techniques had previously been linked with different genres. Purcell, it seems, was consciously updating Christopher Simpson’s similar description in the *Compendium of Practical Musick*:

Of this kind [instrumental music], the chief and most excellent, for Art and Contrivance, are Fancies, of 6, 5, 4, and 3 Parts, intended commonly for viols. In this sort of Musick the Composer (being not limited to words) doth imploy all his Art and Invention solely about the bringing in and carrying on of these Fuges, according to the Order and Method formerly Shewed.¹

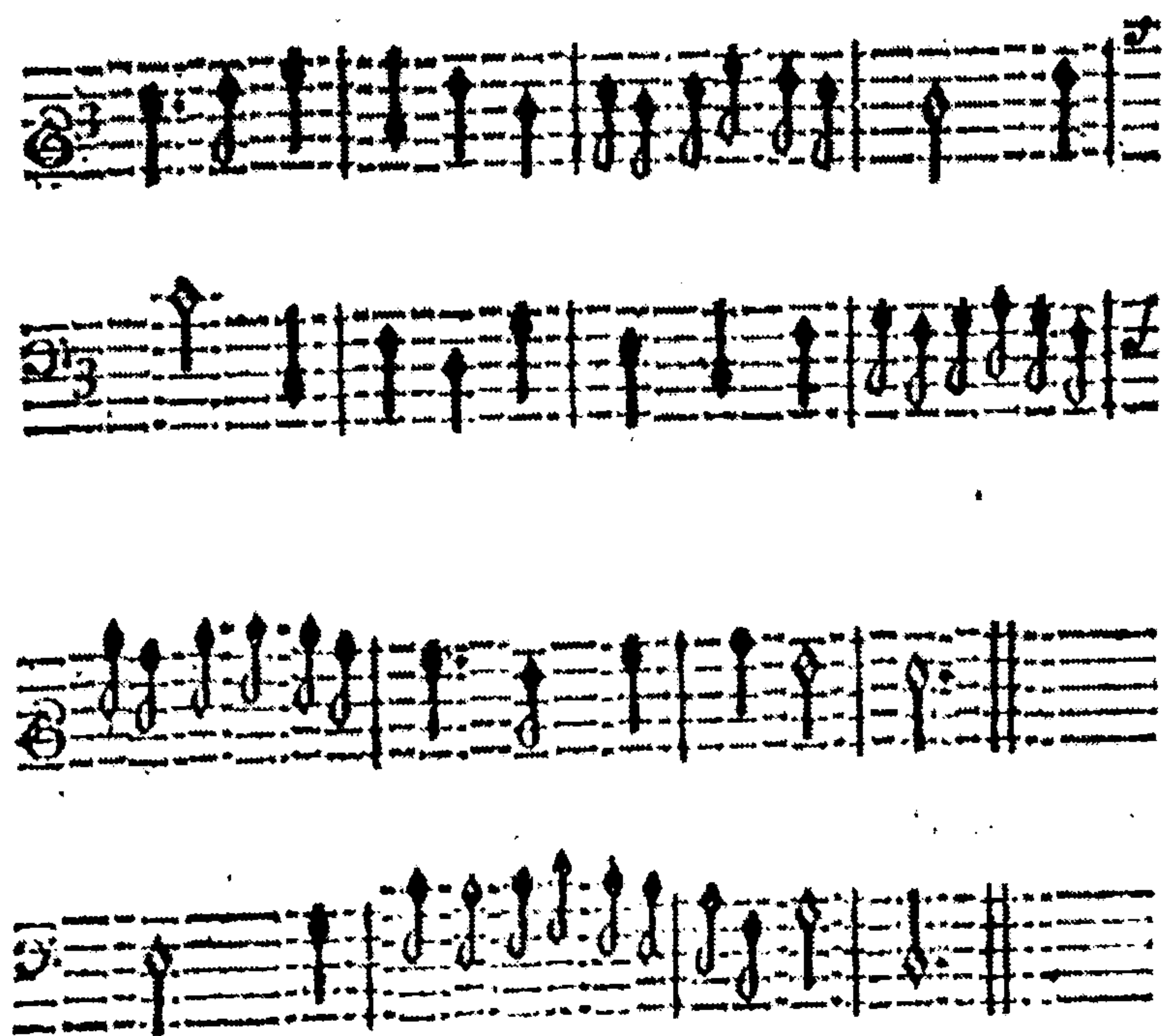
Clearly Simpson is talking about the same compositional technique, and indeed the same values (‘Art’ in the sense of musical artifice) as Purcell: both aim to describe fugal techniques in the abstract before illustrating their use in an appropriate contemporary genre. In this chapter I take the idea of analysing Purcell’s music through *fugeing* and develop it further by asking just *how* Purcell composed strict counterpoint, concentrating on the fantasias since it was in this genre that Purcell brought his techniques to the highest level of sophistication. One of the surprising outcomes of this approach is a new appreciation of the density of relationships

¹ Simpson, p. 115. Purcell updates Simpson’s treatise even more explicitly on pp. 115-6 of ‘The Art of Descant’: finding Simpson’s example of three-part counterpoint ‘too strict and destructive to good Air’, he shows how the same passage might be handled with the two treble parts moving in parallel thirds.

between different pieces, which suggests strongly that Purcell's 'fantasia project' of summer 1680 is best understood as a whole rather than as a series of individual works.² In addition, I show how the analysis of compositional technique can uncover different kinds of artifice, which are obscured by the conventional approach to fugal techniques as an indication of conservatism.

Anyone eager to learn how to write imitative counterpoint from Purcell by reading 'The Art of Descant' might have been forgiven a certain dissatisfaction with his or her chosen text. As Rebecca Herissone observes, the treatise is 'replete with breathtaking examples of imitative complexity, but contain[s] virtually no rules to explain how a student might go about producing his own imitation'.³ Purcell does leave clues, however, particularly when discussing what he calls 'Imitation, or Reports'. This kind of *fugeing*, next in difficulty after 'simple fuge', is noticeably set apart from all the other techniques in that it is the only one not illustrated using the same imitative point (the one used for Purcell's own example of 'double descant', given in Fig. 2.1a). Instead, Purcell provides a passage in two parts based on completely different material, designed to show the imitation of a treble line 'in some few Notes as you find occasion when you set a *Bass* to it' (Fig. 3.1).⁴ In other words,

Fig. 3.1. Purcell, 'The Art of Descant': example of 'Imitation, or Reports'.⁴



² The completed four-part fantasias are all dated between June 10 and August 31, 1680 in Lbl Add. 30930, suggesting a period of intense concentration on this genre which I call Purcell's 'fantasia project'.

³ Herissone, *Music Theory*, p. 195.

⁴ *AD*, p. 108.

such ‘Reports’ involved fitting a bass to given, pre-existing treble part. Purcell was even more explicit on this point in his discussion of *fugeing* in three parts: ‘*Imitation or Reports* [...] needs no Example, because you are confined to a *Treble*, and so must make *Imitation or Reports* in the two Parts as the *Treble* will admit of’.⁵

By implication, therefore, the other kinds of *fugeing* were undertaken in all parts concurrently. Although Purcell gives no specific example of how this might be achieved, Simpson describes such a method in his *Compendium* giving clear, practical advice: the composer should first set out the entries of the point of imitation, leaving the remaining bars blank (Ex. 3.1). After this stage, the student is instructed to ‘fill up the empty places with such Concords and Bindings as you think fittest for carrying on your Composition; until you repeat the Fuge, in one of those Parts that begun it; which may be done either in the same, or in any other Key that will best maintain the Aire of the Musick’.⁶ Thus the composer fits together the entries of the point first, and it is these that determine the way the piece develops.

It is easy to imagine a similar compositional strategy for the beginning of Fantasia 8 (Z. 739), one of the most beautiful and the most artificial of all Purcell’s fantasias (Ex. 3.2). In this case, though, the elimination of all material not belonging to the point leaves a good deal more music than Simpson provides, since Purcell’s entries overlap with each other to create several complexes involving imitation at different pitches and times, not to mention different combinations of the subject and its inversion. While this may not seem all that different from the way in which Simpson uses the end of his subject as a fragment of countersubject (bb. 2 and 4-5 of Ex. 3.1), Simpson’s approach to this aspect of his ‘fuge’ seems too haphazard to have

Ex. 3.1. Simpson, *Compendium*: ‘Example of the first Platform of a Fuge’.⁷



⁵ AD, p. 118.

⁶ Simpson, p. 111.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Ex. 3.2. Fantasia 8, first section: opening platform.

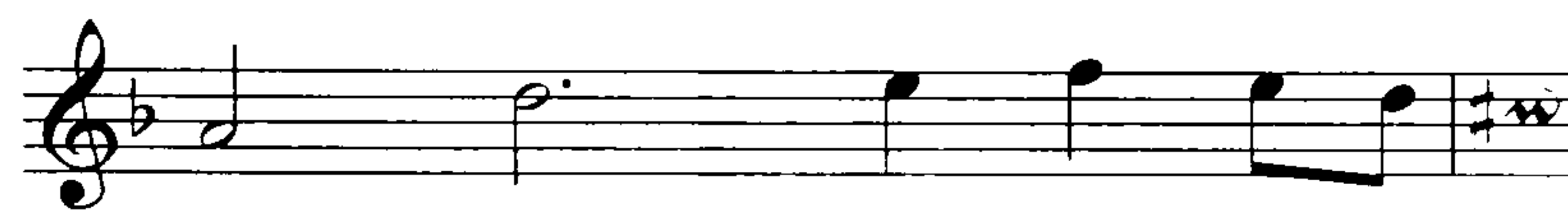
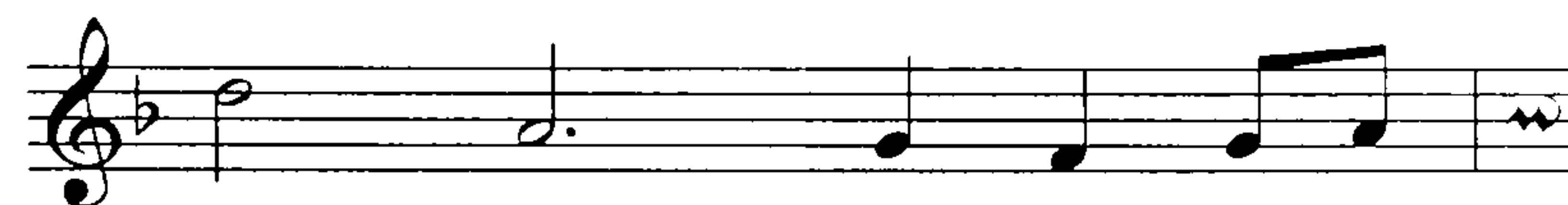


resulted in anything approaching the complexity of Purcell's opening platform: 'Perhaps the latter end of the Fuge-Notes which you have Prickt down, may agree [with the notes of the next entry]', he writes, or, 'If not, you may add such other Notes as may aptly meet the following part at its coming in'.⁸ By contrast, the variety of imitations found in Purcell's first platform seems to be there by design rather than chance. Each of the three two-part complexes employed here is selected for its particular characteristics: the first establishing the treatment of the subject *per arsin et thesin*, the second grounding the harmony by implying a progression from the key note to its fifth and back, and the third beginning again from the key note with greater intensity, owing to its closer imitation. While both Simpson and Purcell appear to work in all parts concurrently, the variety of different combinations in Purcell's first platform strongly suggests that Purcell selected his imitative complexes from a pool of potential combinations worked out in advance. Indeed, the range of imitative combinations is widened considerably in the remainder of this section of the fantasia.

As he did in 1683 Sonata 1/i, Purcell created the opening section of Fantasia 8 from a series of two-voice subject complexes, usually involving imitation at the conventional intervals. In this case, however, the inversion of the subject means that the number of combinations involved is significantly greater: an interlock may be formed from two statements of the subject *arsin* or two statements *thesin*, or equally from one statement of each with either version coming first. Adopting Purcell's terminology, I designate the two forms of the point *arsin* [rising] and *thesin* [falling] according to their overall contour (which in this case is always the same as the direction of the first interval; see Ex. 3.3). In order to adapt the sigla used to describe fugal interlocks in Chapter 2, I use the letters A and T on either side of a colon to represent *arsin* and *thesin* respectively; thus the opening two-voice complex of the

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Ex. 3.3. Fantasia 8, first section: subject.

(a) *arsin*:(b) *thesin*:

(c) Opening two-voice complex.



piece (Ex. 3.3c) can be described as $T:A^{+4, \circ}$ (the interval of transposition is always taken between the second notes of the respective entries in order to avoid confusion caused by any inversion or use of a tonal answer).

Even given Purcell's almost exclusive use of imitation at the unison or octave, fourth or fifth, this material yields a maximum of thirty-six potential two-voice complexes (though of course not all of these are contrapuntally viable). Table 3.1 lists all of the conceivable two-part interlocks arranged in order of complexity, starting with the most artificial (those involving the closest imitation). Those that are not viable are shaded out, and for those that are usable the bar numbers in which they begin in Purcell's fantasia are given. Each complex is also given a code for ease of reference; so the complex in Ex. 3.3c ($T:A^{+4, \circ}$) is referred to as H4.

Without the kind of *a priori* contrapuntal research that I have suggested, the process of composing this section would not only have been extremely laborious, with each imitative entry having to be worked out afresh, but would also have been extremely unlikely to have resulted in the kind of systematic incorporation of all of the most artificial devices that is revealed in Table 3.1. Purcell uses all of the possible combinations that involve entries separated by a semibreve or less; only when we reach those that involve imitation at greater distances do we find viable complexes that were not used.

Yet this kind of investigation of imitative possibilities still does not represent the beginning of Purcell's compositional process. Even with the materials shown in Table 3.1 established in advance, the putative process of assembling these into a

Table 3.1. Two-part fugal complexes in the first section of Fantasia 8.

Complex	Sigla			
		(unis./±8)	4 (+4/-5)	5 (+5/-4)
A	A:A [↓]	19		
B	A:T [↓]			
C	T:T [↓]	3, 16	8, 14, 16,	
D	T:A [↓]			
E	A:A [°]		1, 7	
F	A:T [°]			11, 19
G	T:T [°]	12	16	
H	T:A [°]		1, 9	
J	A:A [°]		11	
K	A:T [°]			19
L	T:T [°]		8, 16	
M	T:A [°]			

complete passage of polyphony would have left far too much to chance to have produced some of the most artificial complexes in this section of Fantasia 8, which are made up of two or three simultaneous two-voice interlocks. The sheer number of such devices becomes apparent when the two-voice complexes are arranged to show the full contrapuntal ‘superstructure’ of the section (Ex. 3.4). As in the analysis of 1683 Sonata 1/i, crossed noteheads in this example indicate moments of alteration; this time, there are more such cases since in a number of instances what looks like ‘free’ material actually derives from attempted subject entries that were ultimately abandoned. Such ‘aborted’ complexes are labelled in brackets, and with dotted arrows.

Many imitative points will yield multiple two-voice interlocks, and even the odd three-voice complex can be attributed to chance, but a passage like that in bars 16-18, in which the subject appears in all four voices simultaneously, seems far less likely to have resulted from the fortuitous combination of entries. The appearance of this, the most contrapuntally remarkable event in the piece, at exactly where one might expect the climax of this section, is too calculated to be a coincidence: it must represent one of the earliest stages of the compositional process.

Ex. 3.4. Fantasia 8, first section: contrapuntal superstructure.

The image displays a musical score for Fantasia 8, first section, showing contrapuntal superstructure. The score is written in G minor (three flats) and common time (C). It consists of four systems of staves, each with a treble, alto, and bass staff. The first system starts at measure 1. The second system starts at measure 6. The third system starts at measure 11. The fourth system starts at measure 16. Various notes and chords are annotated with labels in boxes, connected by arrows indicating their relationships across the staves. The annotations include: E4, H4, M7 (H4), (A4), C, (K5), (B4), (C), (D), H4 (C4), L4, (D), J4, G, F5, C4, (D4), (C6), C, C4, C, (D6), and F5. The score shows a complex contrapuntal structure with many notes marked with 'x' and 'y'.

By working out such passages in advance of the composition of the rest of the section, Purcell was able to ensure that his fugal materials could support the highest levels of artifice, since at this stage in the process he was free to make any necessary

changes to the subject. Thus the exact form of the point is itself the *product* of Purcell's technique of *fugeing*, and not simply its basic material as is conventionally assumed (and indeed as it was in Simpson's instructions for the first platform of a 'fuge').

Paradoxically, though, this moment of supreme compositional artifice is also a passage of extraordinary simplicity. This is because the intervals that form the subject *thesin* will always produce material capable of overlapping with itself at successive periods of one metric unit, according to the technique that John Milsom calls 'stretto fuga'.⁹ This 'interval stock' (a rising fourth, or falling third or fifth) can be seen in the reduction in Ex. 3.5, which adopts Milsom's notation for stretto *fuga* (the inverse – up a third or fifth, or down a fourth – will also work; a 'hold' or repeated note is permissible in either collection).¹⁰ In other words, Purcell need not actually have worked out the four-part complex for it to have had an influence on the earliest stages

Ex. 3.5. Fantasia 8, bb. 16-18: stretto *fuga*.

The musical score for Ex. 3.5 is presented in four staves. The first two staves represent the upper voices, and the last two represent the lower voices. The key signature is one flat (G minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various intervals and a 'C' symbol indicating a specific interval stock. A 'C4' label with an arrow points to a specific interval in the lower voice.

⁹ For a brief example, see Milsom, 'Absorbing Lassus', p. 313; a more comprehensive study, 'Stretto fuga in principle and practice', is forthcoming. I am grateful to John Milsom for his insightful comments on my work on this piece, and for generously sharing as yet unpublished material. No contemporary theorist fully describes stretto *fuga*; Milsom suggests that it is the kind of practical advice that was passed on directly from teacher to pupil, and thus never appeared in published musical pedagogy.

¹⁰ Thomas Morley gives an incomplete description of something similar on page 98 of his *Introduction*: 'in the making of two parts in one in the fourth, if you would have your following part in the waie of counterpoint to follow within one note after the other, you must not ascend two, nor descend three. But if you descend two, and ascend three, it will be well'. A preliminary search for other examples of stretto *fuga* in English instrumental music revealed three examples over a wide chronological spread: the last section of Byrd's Fantasia a4 in G minor, the second section of Locke's fantasia from the third *Consort of Fower Parts*, and the second section of Purcell's Fantasia 5.

of his compositional process. Instead, the complex was incipient in the melodic structure of the material: Purcell wrote the subject *thesin* first, knowing that such an artificial passage would be possible, before experimenting with the other imitative combinations shown in Table 3.1.

The passage in Ex. 3.5 is not the only fragment of artificial counterpoint that appears to have been conceived at an early stage in the compositional process. The augmented entry of the subject *thesin* in bar 13, marked X in Ex. 3.4, seems even more artificial, since it combines the augmentation of the subject with complexes G and C4. In this case, however, Purcell's treatment of the augmented entry suggests that he conceived it slightly later: the rhythmic alteration, needed in order to avoid an unresolved suspension on the second beat of bar 13, must have been made so as to accommodate a pre-existing imitative fragment (complex G). In other words, Purcell incorporated the augmented entry somewhat later in the process than the passage of four-part stretto *fuga*, at a stage when the melodic material was already fixed. Otherwise, he would have been in a position to alter the melodic content of the material such that the augmented entry could be made to fit exactly, thereby increasing its artifice.

After the passage of stretto *fuga* and the augmented entry, one of Purcell's principal concerns seems to have been to contrive a four-part complex combining the *arsin* and *thesin* forms of the point. This process explains the very unusual appearance, in bars 3-4, of a complex involving imitation at the seventh: this passage is a remnant of an attempted combination of complexes C and A4, which would have created a four-part complex in which two entries *thesin* are immediately answered by two *arsin*. The resulting combination had one small voice-leading problem, in the placement of the accented upper auxiliary, F, on the strong third beat of bar 4 (elsewhere in the section Purcell confines this treatment of the fourth note of the subject *arsin* to the weaker second and fourth beats; see bb. 2, 6 and 7). More importantly, however, it would have resulted in a second two-bar phrase cadencing on the key note; Purcell's solution was to remove both problems by stretching out the entry in the second treble over two bars, almost producing another augmented entry (Ex. 3.6).

In a direct parallel with his presentation of illustrations of *fugeing* in 'The Art of Descant' in order of increasing artifice, Purcell used the complexes he created from

Ex. 3.6. Fantasia 8, bb. 3-5 (ten. and tr. II).

(a) Complex A4

(b) Treble 2 augmented

(c) As in bars 3-5

this material in order to structure the first section of Fantasia 8. At the beginning of the piece, the counterpoint is generally made up of simple two-voice interlocks, and incorporates numerous failed complexes both in two voices and in denser textures (see Ex. 3.4 above). As the passage progresses, however, the level of artifice increases. Purcell gradually builds up to the four-part stretto *fuga* by introducing its component two-voice interlock C in bar 3, and complex C4 in bars 8 and 14 (a fragment of complex C in the former case hinting at the larger complex to come). The augmented subject entry appears in bar 13, before the full stretto *fuga* in bar 16, which represents the climax of Purcell's contrapuntal investigation. This passage also marks the furthest modulation from the key note, with a strong cadence on E \flat in bar 18.

A similar process of structuring material in order of increasing artifice can actually be heard in some of Matthew Locke's fantasias. In the second section of the fantasia of the third *Consort of Fower Parts*, Locke begins with simple imitation at the distance of one and a half bars, then introduces successively closer imitation, free inversion and augmentation, and finally a four-part complex towards the end of the section (see Ex. 3.7). Like Purcell, he uses stretto *fuga* to facilitate close imitation of the subject. Locke, however, is much freer in his treatment of material: unlike Purcell, he seems to have worked out the different ways of treating his subject successively, in combination with material not belonging to the point. Thus although the basic principle of organisation is the same, Purcell's insistence on the integrity of the fugal subject, and the corresponding increase in the level of artifice, led him to develop a fundamentally different way of working.

This is not to say, however, that the first section of Purcell's Fantasia 8 contains no alterations to the subject; a number of modifications have already been noted, and in the latter stages of Purcell's imitative process such decisions about whether to

Ex. 3.7. Matthew Locke, *Consort of Fower Parts*, no. 3: second, fugal section.

(a) Simple *fugeing*.

16

(b) Two-part stretto *fuga*.

25

(c) Free inversions and augmentations of the subject.

35

d) Final four-voice complex.

43

change the point become more and more common, and involve simple two-part interlocks as well as larger complexes. The difference is that whereas the successive appearance of Locke's increasingly artificial devices is accompanied by a gradual decrease in fidelity to the original intervallic and rhythmic identity of the point, Purcell retains the original form of his subject throughout his most artificial complexes. His research into the imitative possibilities of his material did, however, yield many combinations (those shaded grey in Table 3.1) that, while not usable in their complete forms, contained shorter fragments of counterpoint that could be worked into the composition at a later stage in the process.¹¹ In bars 5-7, for example, Purcell introduces complex A4 (tr. I/bass) with its first note extended by a minim, thus displacing its augmented second to a weaker beat and ensuring that the end of the bass entry, and thus the resolution of the cadence, coincides with the beginning of bar 7. Similarly, in bars 7-8 Purcell's bass line is derived from another complex that is listed as unviable in Table 3.1: in fact, complex B4 is just about usable in certain contexts, and in this case it is only its overlapping with complex E4 that makes the continuation of the bass entry impossible.

Even without examining every suggested instance of 'aborted' complexes in Ex. 3.4, it soon becomes apparent that this section contains very little material that can be called 'free' without considerable qualification. Although several empty spaces remain between the fugal entries in Ex. 3.4, most of the notes that fill them in the actual piece form harmonically derived bass lines (e.g. bass, bb. 5, 11, 13-14, 16, 19-22) or conventional cadence patterns (tr. II, b. 11; tr. II/ten., b. 14; tr. II, b. 16; all parts, bb. 21³-2). Thus the various aspects of Purcell's approach to *fugeing* account for almost all of the substantive material in the passage under discussion. Even more importantly, though, Ex. 3.4 demonstrates once more the mutual inclusivity of *fugeing* and harmony in this facet of Purcell's compositional technique. The fugal working of the subject does all of the harmonic 'work', to the extent that none of the material that is missing from the 'skeleton score' results in any harmonic ambiguity either at a local level or in the context of the planning of the section.

Just as he later would in 1683 Sonata 1/i, Purcell often uses fugal entries for specific harmonic purposes. In bar 5, for example, Purcell introduces an entry on E in

¹¹ For a similar observation with respect to Bach's C major fugue, *WTC I* see Dreyfus, *Patterns of Invention*, p. 153.

the first treble to intensify the treble II suspension and overlap with the ensuing cadence, a decision that additionally results in the first decisive harmonic move away from the key note by introducing a G \sharp in bar 6³. Some of the more distant modulations can also be attributed to particular fugal processes, in particular the notable tendency of the section to modulate flatwards towards E \flat major and C minor. Such flatwards motion is a common characteristic of stretto *fuga*, owing to the predominance of rising fourths and falling fifths in the necessary ‘interval stock’. Purcell was obliged to modify the stepwise ascent through a fourth at the end of his subject *thesin* to preserve interval rather than mode when answering it at the fourth, in order to avoid an ungrammatical succession of three whole tones (see Ex. 3.8). Complex C4, which is affected by this consideration, is the controlling interlock at both of the most prominent moments of flatwards modulation in this section (bb. 8-9, and 16-18 where it forms part of the larger four-voice stretto *fuga*). Such a prominent harmonic trait has a notable impact on the remainder of the fantasia: the penultimate section strays as far as A \flat major, and the persistence of E \flat s in the closing bars makes the final cadence sound more like an imperfect cadence in G minor than a full close on D.

Such intervallic properties may exert a powerful influence over the harmonic direction of the music, but Purcell retains tight control of the long-range organisation of harmony. This is particularly apparent at the very end of the section, where having cadenced in E \flat at bar 18³, Purcell manages to perform a decisive return to the key note (D) in the space of just three and a half bars. He achieves this by sidestepping from the E \flat major cadence to an entry *arsin* outlining C minor (tr. I, b. 18⁶), then immediately repeating the same form of the subject in D minor, creating a rising sequence. In order to accommodate this, the density of subject entries is noticeably reduced; instead, Purcell concentrates on providing a strong harmonic

Ex. 3.8. Fantasia 8, complex C4: necessary modifications.

(a) Ungrammatical succession of three whole tones produced by preservation of mode.



(b) Correction preserving interval.



accompaniment, over a descending scale in long notes in the bass. Only in the latter stages of this transition does he reintroduce close imitation, making use of two complexes, A and F5, that could be used to outline unambiguous key-note harmonies.

Apart from representing a simple but highly effective means of bringing the section to a close, this use of sequence reflects an important aspect of the overall harmonic planning of this section of Fantasia 8. In returning to D minor by way of a sequential step up, Purcell mirrors the modulation to C minor in bars 7 to 12, which incorporated a step down: the fragment of counterpoint derived from the aborted interlock D in bars 7-8 (bass and tr. I) is repeated a tone lower in bars 10-11 (bass and tr. II; see Ex. 3.4). The result is a large-scale structural symmetry, with the superb harmonic and registral climax of bars 11-12 placed almost exactly at the midpoint of the twenty-two bar section:

7-9	11-12	18-20
Repetition of aborted complex <u>D</u> in sequence, down a tone.	Prominent cadence in C minor	Subject <i>arsin</i> in C minor, followed by interlock <u>A</u> in D minor; hence sequential repetition of subject up a tone.

CREATIVE PROCESS AND PURCELL'S 'FANTASIA PROJECT'

The experience of listening to or playing all of Purcell's fantasias in one sitting can be immensely rewarding for the number of relationships it throws up between different works. An almost unnerving sense of '*déjà entendu*' is common, stimulated by the recognition of passages that recall previous events, perhaps transformed by a new context or subjected to a more intense interrogation of their contrapuntal and expressive potential. Such a moment is the cadence in C minor at the axis of the harmonic symmetry that I identify in the first section of Fantasia 8, at which point Purcell inserts, almost literally, over a bar of music from the first section of Fantasia 7 (Ex. 3.9).

Events like this in Purcell's fantasias cannot be explained as the subconscious result of his intense concentration on the genre in June and August 1680; rather, they are the outward signs of a *conscious* creative process that stretches across the boundaries between individual fantasias to encompass the whole of what I call Purcell's 'fantasia project'. The quotation in Ex. 3.9 is no accident: the same basic

Ex. 3.9. Quotation in Fantasia 8.

(a) Fantasia 8, bb. 11-12.



(b) Fantasia 7, bb. 23-24.



contrapuntal complex, replete with pungent false relation, appears no fewer than five times in the earlier work (see bb. 4, 7, 8, 15 and 23), and is inserted into Fantasia 8 at precisely the moment when the music reaches C minor, the key of Fantasia 7. It is almost as if Purcell is pointing to the creative origins of his material: one of the two subjects of the earlier ‘double fuge’ (tr., b. 23 and bass, b. 24 in Ex. 3.9) is very closely related to the point *arsin* of the first section Fantasia 8, and the re-examination of this material may indeed have been the creative impulse for the new work.

Such connections between different fantasias are fundamentally different from the kinds of motivic links between successive sections of the same work proposed by Martin Adams and Oliver Neighbour: instead of implying a desire on Purcell’s part to unify the structure of a piece, they emphasise his particular approach to the basics of the creative process. The many cases of explicit similarity of fugal materials between fantasias, such as that shown in Ex. 3.10, reveal a composer who was fascinated by the idea of stretching *fugeing* to its limits, his desire to test the potential of his materials to exhaustion requiring more music than could often be accommodated in any one work.

Ex. 3.11. First platforms of three more consort works that share imitative materials.

(a) Fantasia 6, bb. 62-6.

62 Quick

(b) Fantasia 11, bb. 1-5.

(c) In nomine 2, bb. 10-14.

10

canons and rounds on a single staff by indicating subsequent entries with the symbol \mathfrak{S} as in Fig. 3.2. Aligned with each \mathfrak{S} in Fig. 3.2b is a series of numbers indicating the interval *above* the written subject of the possible entries, grouped with the letters A (*arsin*) and T (*thesin*) to indicate the form of the subject implied. Complexes are assumed to be inversionally equivalent, such that the figure 4 indicates an entry a fourth above *or* a fifth below the written subject. The complexes listed are considered ‘intrinsically viable’ in that they make good two-part counterpoint by themselves (the only exception is when the higher part makes a fourth with the lower part, in which case a conceptual bass part beneath the complex is assumed). Each \mathfrak{S} in the chart represents an alternative, rather than a successive point of entry for a second

Fig. 3.2. Notation of interlocks in Fantasias 6 and 11, and In nomine 2.

(a) Three viable complexes.

Three musical staves illustrating complex interlock notations. The first staff is labeled $A:A^{+5}, d$ and shows a melodic line with a complex interlock symbol. The second staff is labeled $A:T^{+4}, d$ and shows a similar complex interlock. The third staff is labeled $A:A^{-5}, d = A:A^{+4}, d$ and shows a complex interlock with a note below it.

(b) Notation on a single staff.

A musical staff illustrating notation on a single staff. It features a complex interlock symbol with a vertical dashed line above it labeled $A: 5$ and a vertical dashed line below it labeled $A: 4$ and $T: 4$.

voice; while it may be possible to construct larger, multi-voice complexes using entries at more than one such point, no such larger complexes are indicated by the notation unless specifically noted as such.

The intrinsically viable two-part interlocks that can be formed from the material in these three fantasia sections are shown in Fig. 3.3. This and all subsequent figures are notated with the crotchet as the base unit of time, in order to facilitate comparison; similarly, all of the complexes are notated with an assumed key note of C, the ‘natural’ key that Purcell recommends as simplest for beginners. Barlines are not notated, since the metrical placing of the entries in all of the works in question is variable, and in some cases different two-voice complexes require different metrical placing in order to make them viable (for example, in order to prepare, strike and resolve a suspension correctly). The differing lengths of the *arsin* and *thesin* forms of the subject given in Fig. 3.3 reflect their use in the fantasias: these are the parts of the subject in each form that remain intact throughout the works, both rhythmically and in terms of pitch.

The examination of Purcell’s use of these fugal materials not only demonstrates the extent to which Purcell’s creative approach transcended the boundaries of individual fantasias, it also lends support to the hypothesis that Purcell engaged in some form of pre-compositional investigation into the imitative potential of his materials, as I suggested in connection with Fantasia 8. As such, it offers a possible model for this part of Purcell’s compositional process that is not recoverable from the original sources; as I showed in Chapter 2, Purcell’s copies of the

Fig. 3.3. Intrinsically viable two-part complexes.

Figure 3.3 displays two musical staves, each showing a single melodic line with four notes. Vertical dashed lines connect specific notes to labels indicating the 'A' and 'T' forms of the subject. The first staff shows the following connections: the first note (C) to 'A: 5' and 'T: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8'; the second note (D) to 'A: 2, 4, 6, 7' and 'T: 2, 6, 7, 8'; the third note (E) to 'A: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8' and 'T: 5, 6, 7, 8'; and the fourth note (F) to 'A: 2, 4, 5, 7' and 'T: 4'. The second staff shows the following connections: the first note (C) to 'A: 2, 4, 6, 8' and 'T: 2, 3, 4, 8'; the second note (D) to 'A: 2, 3, 5, 7, 8' and 'T: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8'; the third note (E) to 'A: 2, 3, 5, 7, 8' and 'T: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8'; and the fourth note (F) to 'A: 2, 3, 5, 7, 8' and 'T: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8'.

fantasias in Lbl Add. 30930 contain numerous emendations made at the latest stage of composition, but very little evidence concerning the process by which the works were actually composed (see pp. 81-86 above). This hypothesis also raises an important question: if Purcell was systematically working through large amounts of potential imitative material in the manner in which I have suggested, why have no sketches or notes survived in which we can trace this process?

It is possible that Purcell was able to process large amounts of material in the way I have described without writing out long lists of imitative combinations. We can never know what his capacity for musical memory was, but at a time when writing materials were valued more highly and the boundaries between composition and improvisation were considerably more blurred than we appreciate readily today, it is highly likely to have been an important part of his musical mind. Furthermore, devices like stretto *fuga* and invertible counterpoint provided valuable shorthand for devising material that is susceptible to such treatment, with the result that a large amount of the information to be remembered could be learnt over time as general principles, rather than particular aspects of the imitative materials in question. As a result, it is at least possible that the kinds of sketches that we assume Purcell would have needed were in fact never made, since they were simply not necessary.

There is some evidence, however, that Purcell did use brief sketches to work out compositional ideas when he was writing imitative counterpoint. In her article on Purcell's revisions, Rebecca Herissone identified a short passage in two voices that sketched out a few bars of the anthem 'Let mine eyes run down with tears (z. 24), on the back of a correction slip inserted into Oxford, Bodleian MS Mus.c.26.¹² The fact that this paper was cut up and used for another purpose indicates that such sketches were not considered worth keeping after they had performed their initial function, so if Purcell did make any similar rough drafts when composing the fantasias it may be that they were subsequently destroyed. It is even possible that such sketches were made on some sort of impermanent surface in a similar manner to Renaissance composers' use of *cartella* to work out the details of imitation and counterpoint (though there is, to my knowledge, no record of such a practice among Restoration

¹² Herissone, 'Purcell's Revisions, pp. 63-5.

composers).¹³ In the absence of any such extant materials, however, the amount of information contained in the final versions of the works provides valuable evidence concerning the likely features of Purcell's compositional technique.

Many aspects of Purcell's approach to *fugeing* in the three works under discussion here are already familiar from the foregoing analyses, and are thus left unexplored in the following analysis. Instead, I focus on the ways in which Purcell brought new concerns to bear on the material in each successive passage. In each case it is the recognition of unexplored possibilities in a completed work that gives impetus to the resumption of interest in the material. In Fantasia 11 it was the opening up of new intervals of imitation that afforded possibilities not available in the more restricted Fantasia 6, while in In nomine 2 Purcell further widened the scope of his experimentation by shortening the subject in some instances, thereby making more complexes intrinsically viable.

Fantasia 6, bars 62-82

The information in Fig. 3.3 provides a basis on which to assess Purcell's use of the possibilities inherent in his subject material in this first work. In Fig. 3.4 the complexes heard in Fantasia 6 are represented in bold typeface and coloured red, with the remainder of intrinsically viable complexes shown in black. The use of brackets for one entry (T:A^{+3, d}) indicates that this complex arises from the doubling of another part at the third, rather than an independent imitative entry in its own right.

Fig. 3.4. Fantasia 6, bb. 62-82: complexes used.

The figure shows two musical staves with notes and rests. Above and below the staves are various complex labels, some in bold and some in black. The labels are as follows:

- Staff 1 (left): A: 5, T: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 (bold), A: 2, 4, 6, 7 (bold), T: 2, 6, 7, 8 (bold).
- Staff 2 (left): A: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (bold), T: 5, 6, 7, 8 (bold), A: 2, 4, 5, 7 (bold), T: 4 (bold).
- Staff 1 (right): A: 2, 4, 6, 8 (bold), T: 2, 3, 4, 8 (bold).
- Staff 2 (right): A: 2, (3), 5, 7, 8 (bold), T: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 (bold).

¹³ Jessie Ann Owens, 'The Milan Partbooks: Evidence of Cipriano de Rore's Compositional Process', *JAMS*, 37 (1984), 270-98 (pp. 276-283).

Two notable characteristics of Purcell's fugal approach in this section of Fantasia 6 are immediately apparent from this diagram: his marked preference for complexes involving imitation at the fourth, fifth or octave (nine of the twelve complexes in total), and similarly for imitation at the distance of two crotchet beats (just over half of the complexes used). The importance of these two observations is easily observed when the complexes are laid out as they appear in the fantasia, demonstrating the imitative framework on which the section is built (Ex. 3.12). This example retains the continuation of each entry, since it is so prominent melodically in this passage. In imitative terms, however, the notes after those given in Fig. 3.4 are redundant: all instances of imitation at a distance greater than one bar are incidental to

Ex. 3.12. Fantasia 6, bb. 62-80: two-voice interlocks.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with four staves (treble, two alto, and bass). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is annotated with boxes containing labels for imitation complexes, with arrows pointing to the specific notes in the staves.

- System 1 (Measures 62-67):**
 - Measure 62: Treble staff (A:A⁻⁵, J), Bass staff (A:A⁻⁵, J).
 - Measure 63: Treble staff (A:A⁻⁴, J), Bass staff (A:A⁻⁵, J).
 - Measure 64: Treble staff (A:A⁻⁵, J), Bass staff (A:A⁻⁷, J).
 - Measure 65: Treble staff (A:A⁻⁵, J), Bass staff (A:T⁺⁴, J).
 - Measure 66: Treble staff (A:A⁻⁵, J), Bass staff (A:A⁻⁷, J).
 - Measure 67: Treble staff (A:A⁻⁵, J), Bass staff (A:A⁻⁷, J).
- System 2 (Measures 68-73):**
 - Measure 68: Treble staff (A:T⁻², J), Bass staff (T:T⁺⁵, J).
 - Measure 69: Treble staff (A:T⁻², J), Bass staff (A:T⁻², J).
 - Measure 70: Treble staff (A:T⁻², J), Bass staff (A:T⁻², J).
 - Measure 71: Treble staff (A:T⁻², J), Bass staff (A:T⁻², J).
 - Measure 72: Treble staff (A:T⁻², J), Bass staff (A:T⁻², J).
 - Measure 73: Treble staff (A:T⁻², J), Bass staff (A:T⁻², J).
- System 3 (Measures 74-80):**
 - Measure 74: Treble staff (T:A⁻⁸, J), Bass staff (A:T⁺⁸, J).
 - Measure 75: Treble staff (T:A⁻⁸, J), Bass staff (A:T⁺⁸, J).
 - Measure 76: Treble staff (T:A⁻⁸, J), Bass staff (A:T⁺⁸, J).
 - Measure 77: Treble staff (T:A⁻⁸, J), Bass staff (A:T⁺⁸, J).
 - Measure 78: Treble staff (T:A⁻⁸, J), Bass staff (A:T⁺⁸, J).
 - Measure 79: Treble staff (T:A⁻⁸, J), Bass staff (A:T⁺⁸, J).
 - Measure 80: Treble staff (T:A⁻⁸, J), Bass staff (A:T⁺⁸, J).

other interlocks involving closer imitation, and this portion of the material is freely altered throughout in order to accommodate otherwise unviable entries.

Just as in other works he confined himself to imitation at the conventional intervals of fourth, fifth and octave, so Purcell made these intervals the most important in the first passage in which he explored the potential of this material. Of the few interlocks involving imitation at other intervals, the one at the third has already been observed as the by-product of a doubling, while the imitation of the subject *arsin* at the lower seventh, three beats later (bb. 65-7) results from the combination of two other complexes involving imitation at the fourth (see Ex. 3.12). This leaves only the two instances of the same imitation at the lower second (bb. 71-2 and 73-4) as evidence of any exploration in this passage of viable complexes outside the simplest intervallic relationships.

Purcell's concentration on imitation at the distance of two beats served a particular contrapuntal purpose, preserving the syntactic function of the fifth note of the subject as the preparation and striking of a suspension, which depended on the metrical placing of the point. This is why each of the first four entries of the point begins on a strong beat, and in each case the new entry creates a suspension in the part of its immediate predecessor (bb. 63¹, 63³ and 64¹). With the point in inversion, though, the situation is quite different: while the melodic element remains intact, the fifth note can no longer form a preparation and suspension (which would require resolution by a melodic step down, something incompatible with the continuation of the point). As a result, Purcell was less concerned to maintain the metrical placing of *thesin* entries; not being tied to a metre-specific syntactic function, these tend to occur on the weaker beats. Indeed, where they are placed on strong beats the result is a fifth note tied over the barline followed by a stepwise ascent, which necessitates unusual voice-leading like the 9-10 suspension in bar 76 in an effort to avoid over-static harmony.

The importance of these metrical properties of the subject can be seen in Purcell's approach to interlocks involving the combination of an entry *arsin* with one *thesin*, which appear five times in the course of the whole section. Where this happens at the distance of two crotchet beats, one of two things must happen: either the *arsin* entry is displaced by a beat, thus destroying the syntactic function of the fifth note, as in bars 65-7; or the *thesin* entry is displaced, with the result that the fifth note is tied over

the barline as it is at the start of bar 76 and bar 79, necessitating some extremely deft handling of irregular dissonances in each case.

Purcell's solutions to this problem can be seen in the two complexes that involve imitation at the crotchet. In bars 78-9, he begins the complex $A:T^{+8}\downarrow$ on a strong beat, with the result that the suspension of the *arsin* entry is left intact, and indeed enhanced by the fifth note of the entry *thesin*, which falls on the strong third beat of bar 79 and provides the necessary dissonance; at the same time, Purcell shortens the fifth note of the entry *thesin* by a crotchet. In the case of bars 71-4, however, the potential solution is undermined by the placement of the beginning of the complex $A:T^{+7}\downarrow$ not on a strong beat, but a weak one (bb. 71² and 73²). The result is a moment of rhythmic ambiguity reminiscent of Byrd, which relies on exactly the association of melodic and syntactic elements, tied to metrical placing, that had been set up from the beginning of the section. The sense of rhythmic unrest, enhanced by the unusual imitation at the seventh and the momentary reduction in texture at this point, suggest that Purcell was deliberately upsetting the otherwise stable metrical structure of the section in this passage. At the same time, though, these two sequential statements of the same interlock have a clear relationship to the underlying harmonic purpose of this passage: the movement round the cycle of fifths from G (b. 71) to C (73) and F (75) relies on the arrival at each point of rest on a strong beat, a function that this complex performs perfectly without any need to alter the continuation of the subject.

Fantasia 11, bars 1-24

It is not known whether the dates at the head of each of Purcell's four-part fantasias in Lbl Add. 30930 are dates of composition or copying, but if they represent the former, then the date Purcell wrote at the top of Fantasia 11 is most revealing. Fantasias 4 (the first four-part fantasia) to 10 are all given dates at roughly equal intervals between 10 and 30 June 1680, but after Fantasia 10 Purcell seems to have laid aside his 'fantasia project' for some time: Fantasia 11 is dated August 18, some seven weeks after its predecessor, with the last complete four-part fantasia, no. 12, following a couple of weeks later on August 31.

It seems highly likely that Purcell's return to writing fantasias on August 18 began with – perhaps it had even been motivated by – a browse through some old notes and sketches that Purcell found among his work on the previous fantasias. The

opening of Fantasia 11 (Ex. 3.11b) deliberately avoids the complexes that were so prominent in Fantasia 6, instead exploring no fewer than three new two-voice complexes ($A:T^{+4}_{\downarrow}$, $A:A^{+5}_{\infty}$, and $A:T^{+7}_{\infty}$) within the space of just three bars.

Despite Purcell's desire to differentiate between his treatment of the material in the two fantasias so early in the piece, the descent of this section of Fantasia 11 from the earlier passage is quite clear from his treatment of the continuation of the subject. In Fantasia 6, this material (after the fifth note) was consistently present throughout the section, though as we have seen its exact intervallic and rhythmic content was considerably more varied than the that of the subject itself. In Fantasia 11, however, Purcell's treatment of this material is much more fluid: the point *arsin* regularly ends with the resolution of the suspension (eg. bb. 3, 5, 6, 11) or even before it (bb. 13, 16, 17, 19, 23), while the point *thesin* rarely proceeds beyond the fifth note (the notable exception being the treble II entry at bar 6⁴, in which the entire continuation of the subject *thesin* as it appears in Fantasia 6 is retained).

Nevertheless, the impact of these discarded fragments of melody can still be detected in Fantasia 11. This can be seen by reconstructing the beginning of the work as if Purcell had retained the continuation of the subject, as I have done in Ex. 3.13. As in previous 'skeleton scores', notes that Purcell amended are shown as crossed noteheads, in this case not as part of the subject itself but its continuation.

Purcell made two kinds of change to the material in this reconstructed opening. First there were the three voice-leading transgressions marked in Ex. 3.13, each of which he easily rectified either by altering individual notes or by dropping the continuation of the subject altogether (compare Ex. 3.11b). The second kind of change, meanwhile, was a response to more creative concerns. By progressing

Ex. 3.13. Fantasia 11, opening: reconstructed with continuation of point from Fantasia 6.

(Sus. against resolution)

(4 above bass)

(Par. 5)

upwards by step after the resolution of the suspension in the subject *arsin* (tr. I, bb. 3 and 4-5; bass, bb. 5-6), Purcell was able to make this version of the point imply a melodic cadence, with the resolution of the suspension functioning as a leading note. Remarkably, considering its obvious implication, this was a change that did not occur once in Fantasia 6. Having made the alteration, Purcell proceeded to play with the cadential implication, inserting a series of interrupted cadences that make a notable contribution to the rather unsettling tension between clear harmonic direction and refusal to find resolution that is a feature of this section of the fantasia.

The strong sense of cadential function provided by this alteration to the subject and its continuation also allowed Purcell a much greater freedom of harmonic range in this work than in Fantasia 6. This is particularly obvious later in the section, where a series of entries *arsin* in quick succession on E, B and F# effect a speedy modulation sharpwards from A minor to B minor. Without the alteration of the subject, Purcell would have required passages of 'free' counterpoint in order to incorporate the necessary cadential progressions; by modifying the subject to include strongly marked cadential lines, however, he could entrust much of this harmonic work to his imitative materials and thus maintain a higher degree of contrapuntal artifice. Indeed, a direct comparison between Fantasias 6 and 11 shows this to great effect (Ex. 3.14). Whereas in Fantasia 6 (Ex. 3.14a) the modulation from F to G necessitates strongly goal-directed material that is unrelated to the subject, the similar modulation in Fantasia 11 (Ex. 3.14b) is achieved almost exclusively with entries of the point; only the bass resorts to harmonic function without thematic reference.

Ex. 3.14. Fantasias 6 and 11, contrasting modulations.

(a) Fantasia 6, bb. 67-71.

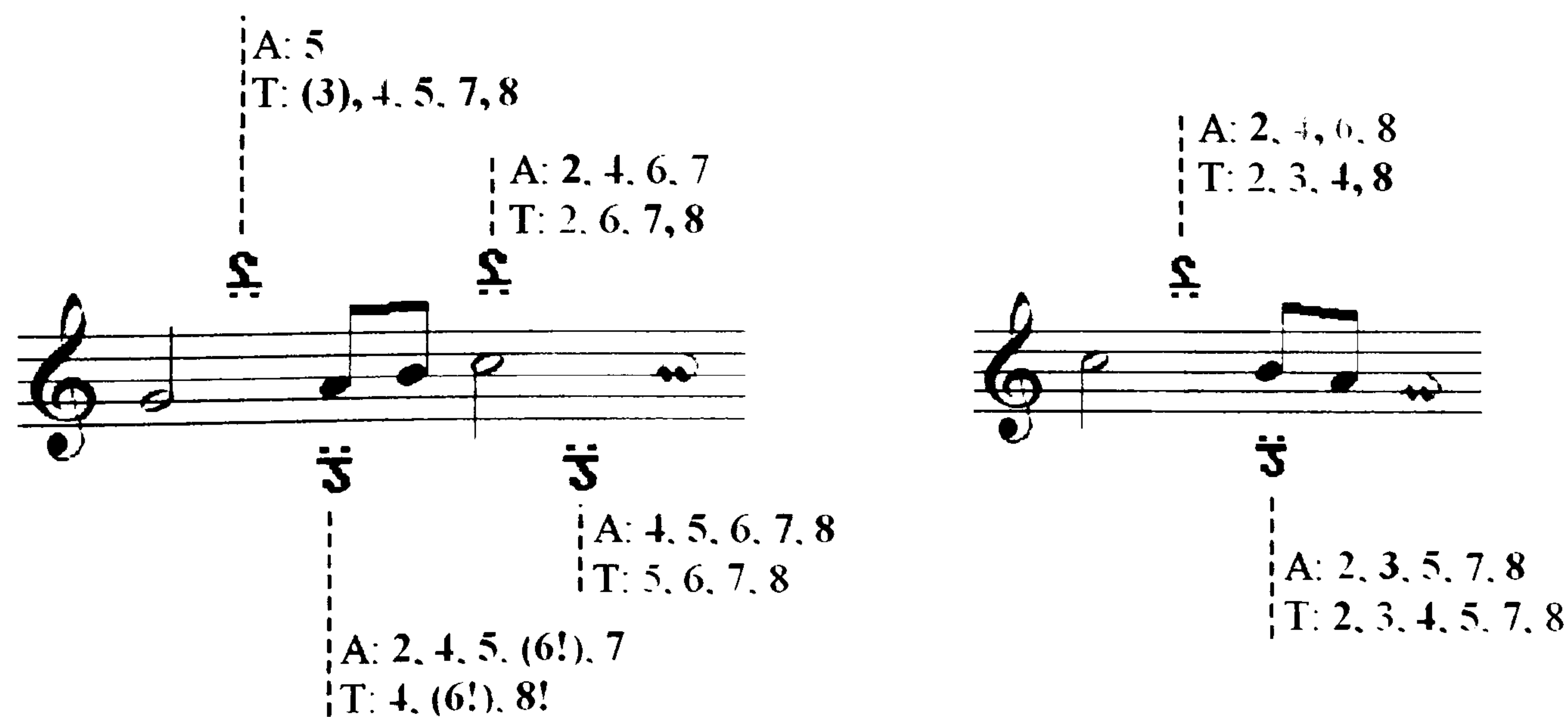
(b) Fantasia 11, bb. 18-21.



Purcell's exploration of new interlocks in this section of Fantasia 11 continued beyond the first platform into the whole passage of *fugeing*. Of those that remained unused from Fantasia 6, he made use of all of the two-voice complexes involving imitation of the subject *arsin* at the distance of one or two beats, and a further eight of those involving imitation of the subject *thesin* at the same distances (shown in red in Fig. 3.5; complexes used in Fantasia 6 but not in Fantasia 12 are shown bold in black). Then in three more cases he incorporated imitation that is not intrinsically viable, by removing the problematic part of the initial entry (marked with an exclamation mark).

When it came to imitation at greater distances, Purcell seems to have chosen interlocks for their specific contrapuntal properties rather than attempting to include as many different complexes as possible as an end in itself. The strong syntactic element of the subject made many of the entries at the distances of three or four beats undesirable, since they obscured the suspension and corresponding cadence associated with the end of the subject *arsin* in this fantasia. In this context, it is revealing that Purcell truncated both entries of the point that are imitated after three

Fig. 3.5. Fantasia 11, bb. 1-24: complexes used.



beats in Fantasia 11, removing the suspension altogether (ten. and bass, bb. 17-18; tr. II and ten., bb. 18-20). Conversely, the complexes involving imitation after four beats (see, for example, ten. and tr. I in the opening platform, Ex. 3.11b) are all chosen for their use of intervals of imitation that intensify the dissonance of the suspension.

In nomine 2, bars 10-22

This passage represents the last fruits of Purcell's engagement with the material used in Fantasias 6 and 11 among his consort works. In keeping with his gradual exploration of the imitative potential of this simple subject in the previous two works, Purcell explores still more fugal combinations, again concentrating on the most artificial interlocks by aiming for the closest possible imitation (Fig. 3.6; those complexes that are used for the first time in the *In nomine* are underlined): in all, no fewer than eleven additional complexes appear in this section. Given the exhaustive use of complexes involving imitation after one and two beats in the previous fantasia sections, this often meant making alterations to the substance of the subject itself (as shown by the number of exclamation marks, indicating interlocks that were not intrinsically viable), something that was comparatively rare in the earlier works.

Perhaps surprisingly, this observation has important implications for our understanding of the specific dating of Purcell's consort works. The staggering range of intrinsically viable interlocks of this material makes it unlikely that Purcell would have resorted to some of the difficult imitations incorporated into *In nomine 2* if this was the first time he had used it; the lengths to which he goes to incorporate them make sense only against the background of the existing passages on the same subject.

Fig. 3.6. *In nomine 2*, bb. 10-22: complexes used.

Figure 3.6 displays two musical examples of complex interlocks used in *In nomine 2*, bars 10-22. Each example shows a single note on a treble clef staff, with a dashed line indicating a complex of intervals for two voices (A and T). The complexes are listed as follows:

- Example 1 (Left):**
 - Complex 1: A: 5, 7!; T: 3, 4, 5, 6!, 7, 8
 - Complex 2: A: 2, 4, 6, 7; T: 2, 6, 7, 8
 - Complex 3: A: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; T: 4!, 5, (6), 7, 8
 - Complex 4: A: (2), 4, 5, 7; T: (2!), 4, 5!, (7!)
- Example 2 (Right):**
 - Complex 5: A: 2, 4, 6, 8; T: 2, 3, 4, 8
 - Complex 6: A: 2, 3, 5, 7, 8; T: 2, (5), 4, 5, 6!, 7, 8

Since, unlike the four-part fantasias, the *Fantasia Upon One Note* and the two In nomines bear no dates in Lbl Add. 30930, it is not possible to date these works reliably on external grounds. Franklin Zimmerman placed both In nomines ‘before 1680’, presumably on the assumption that Purcell composed them before the four-part fantasias but copied them into Lbl Add. 30930 later, in accordance with his grouping of works by size of ensemble.¹⁴ There is, however, little other evidence to indicate that the In nomines were necessarily composed earlier: although neither In nomine is as audacious as the four-part fantasias in harmonic terms, this could be attributed to the presence of the *cantus firmus*, and is also in keeping with the more austere tone that so many writers observe in the works. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, then, the apparent existence of a single creative process spanning all three of these works strongly suggests that Purcell composed In nomine 2 at least after Fantasias 6 and 11, thus reinforcing the idea that the sequence in which the works appear in Lbl Add. 30930 is representative of their order of composition.

Even more than Fantasia 11, In nomine 2 relies on the shortest forms of the subject material. The continuation of the subject found in Fantasia 6 is rare, and very often the point consists only of the stepwise melodic movement through a fourth in both *arsin* and *thesin* forms of the material. There are two prominent exceptions to this, occurring in the treble I and tenor I parts in bars 11-12 and 12-13 respectively. Both instances involve the interpretation of the fifth note of the point as a suspended fourth degree of the scale, resolving to the minor third of a chord on the key note (see Ex. 3.11c, bb. 11-13). This is important as it is the first instance of such a context for this important syntactic-harmonic event: in Fantasias 6 and 11 the same suspension was commonly heard as a key note falling to a leading note, or a fourth resolving to a major third. Since In nomine 2 is the first of the three works in the minor mode, Purcell was able to give this suspension a slightly altered harmonic context. The new cadential version of the point *arsin* from Fantasia 11, in which the resolution of this same suspension was followed by a step upward to the local key note, is not found at all in In nomine 2.

Some of the methods by which Purcell increased the range of available complexes are shown in Ex. 3.15, which shows the imitative parts of the beginning

¹⁴ Zimmerman, *Catalogue*, pp. 379-80.

Ex. 3.15. In nomine 2, bb. 10⁴-16: two-voice canonic complexes (reduction).

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 10-12) shows a canon between voices A and A, with intervals of +4 and -2. The second system (measures 13-16) shows a canon between voices A and T, with intervals of -3/-5 and -2/-4, and a canon between voices T and A, with intervals of -3/-5 and +8.

of this section of In nomine 2. Several entries proceed only as far as the melodic fourth, and the shortening of the beginning of the point (bb. 10, 11, 12, 14 and 16) is a feature even where Purcell was not forced into it to facilitate otherwise impossible imitation. By introducing this version of the subject from the beginning (bb. 10 and 11), and using it periodically throughout the section (bb. 14 and 16), he was able to use it when necessary (as in b. 12) to incorporate more difficult complexes without significantly damaging the melodic identity of the fugal materials. Finally, Purcell's incorporation of multiple interlocks through the doubling of entries at the third or sixth, a feature of this passage, is shown in bars 16-17. This technique enabled him to build denser textures simply by overlapping straightforward two-voice complexes.

FALSE ARTIFICE?

Far from resulting in the kind of 'dreary catalogue of contrapuntal devices' that Martin Adams fears,¹⁵ analysis that begins from Purcell's technique of *fugeing* can provide a much more productive approach to his achievements than has hitherto been available. It offers insights into his invention of materials and his attitudes towards their use, the kinds of decisions he had to make as part of the compositional process and the principles that guided them, and even the implications of his composition of a

¹⁵ Adams, p. 99.

large number of works in the same genre within a small amount of time. In the final analysis of this chapter I turn this on its head somewhat, to suggest that the kinds of contrapuntal procedures I have observed, and even the process of *fugeing* in itself, are not the only ways in which Purcell pursued compositional artifice in the fantasias. Indeed, the kind of analysis that draws conclusions about Purcell's creative principles from the simple naming of contrapuntal procedures, without examining how these actually work, can be doubly misleading: it both assumes that counterpoint and imitation are automatically markers of high musical artifice (thereby undermining important technical distinctions between different approaches to *fugeing*), and undermines the extent to which other musical factors can contribute to the creation of highly artificial passages.

The end of Fantasia 12 (Z. 743) is one of the most exciting of all the closing passages of Purcell's fantasias, with its direct and vigorous subject material and ingenious juxtaposition of harmonic direction with cadential ambiguity: the music seems continually to want to close, yet the manner in which it ultimately does so is as unexpected as it is satisfactory. This is also one of the most celebrated passages in Purcell's chamber music for contrapuntal virtuosity; here, for example, in the words of Peter Holman:

It is in his contrapuntal technique that Purcell departs furthest from Locke. The imitative points in the fantasias of the Consort of Four Parts are mostly based on one or two ideas; only in Fantasia no. 5 does Locke present three ideas simultaneously, nowhere does he use inversion or augmentation. Inversion is found in most of Purcell's four-part fantasias, and it is combined with augmentation in the opening section of Z739, with single and double augmentation in the opening section of Z735, and with single, double and triple augmentation in an astonishing passage towards the end of no. 12 Z743 (31 August 1680). Such things had not been a regular part of English consort music for generations, and one has to go back to the reign of James I – to the canons of John Bull and Elway Bevin (praised by Purcell in *An Introduction to the Skill of Musick*, and copied by Daniel Henstridge in Add. MS 30933, fos. 141-61) – before encountering a body of English music so taken up with formal contrapuntal devices.¹⁶

The comparison with John Bull and Elway Bevin is perhaps flattering to the two earlier composers; for all that Purcell admired Bevin's *Briefe and Short Introduction*, as observed by Holman, his numerous canons, together with those of John Bull, are not directly comparable with Purcell's fantasias.¹⁷ They are conceived as technical exercises and puzzles, exploring canonic writing as an end in itself just as Purcell did

¹⁶ Holman, pp. 80-82.

¹⁷ Elway Bevin, *A Briefe and Short Instruction of the Art of Musicke* (London: R. Young, 1631).

in his own canonic settings of the Gloria (Z.104-6), and in his Laudate Dominum and Miserere mei (ZZ. 108-109). In the fantasias, by comparison, Purcell values such artifice more as a means to an end: while he is often systematic in his research into the technical possibilities of his subject material, such exhaustive compositional strategies always coexist with a concern for their expressive potential, both in terms of their intrinsic qualities (melodic patterns, dissonances created by close imitation) and the arrangement of the inventive materials with their particular harmonic consequences. The comparison is also misleading in that canon in the strict sense is actually very rare in Purcell's fantasias. The extraordinary chromatic take on a simple stretto *fuga* in the second section of Fantasia 8 (bb. 26-30), which produces a canon 2 in 1 at the lower fifth between treble I and bass, is a glorious exception to this rule; otherwise, the contrapuntal devices that Holman describes are predominantly used to create close imitation of comparatively short subjects, rather than extended canonic workings.

A more fundamental problem with Holman's assertion about Fantasia 12 is its assumption that the simultaneous incorporation of inversion and augmentation (single, double and triple) necessarily indicates an increase in compositional effort on the part of Purcell. Holman is right to observe that the subject is treated in all of these ways in this passage, but both of the other two passages he mentions are arguably more artificial in fugal terms than the end of Fantasia 12, despite the greater degree of augmentation in the latter work. This is not to say that Fantasia 12 is less accomplished as a piece of music, but it does indicate that other concerns guided Purcell's approach to its composition.

A brief comparison with the first section of Fantasia 4 (Z. 735), mentioned by Holman, illustrates the comparative reduction in artifice in Fantasia 12. Firstly, Purcell shows little interest in combining the subject of Fantasia 12 with itself at original note-values, the basic conceit of his compositional technique in all of the works analysed thus far. The opening of Fantasia 4 (Ex. 3.16) explores at least seven different two-voice interlocks in the space of just six bars. By contrast, not once in the closing section of Fantasia 12 does Purcell combine *arsin* and *thesin* entries in one overlapping complex, and every time the subject appears as part of a two-voice interlock it is imitated at the octave or unison, a minim apart. This may partly result from the brevity of the subject, and Purcell's well-judged decision to confine entries of the subject in crotchets to the weak beats of the bar (since much of its rhythmic

Ex. 3.16. Fantasia 4, bb. 1-6.

identity, and the cadential drive of the section, derives from this anacrusic placing). However, even these strictures leave imitation of the subject *arsin* at the upper fifth or sixth, or *thesin* at the upper fourth, available, none of which Purcell incorporates into the section (though the latter does arise in bars 71-3 as a result of the doubling of the ten. II entry at the third). Similarly, several combinations of the subject mixing entries *arsin* and *thesin* are possible but not used.

The levels of artifice in the two sections contrast even further in their treatment of augmented entries. In Fantasia 4 (Ex. 3.17a) the double-augmented subject entry in bar 14 is combined with a series of entries in the original note values, creating a four-part imitative fabric in which each voice plays an equal role. By contrast, the passage in Ex. 3.17b from Fantasia 12 simply combines the triple-augmented entry of the subject (ten. II) with a series of paired entries, all using the same two-part complex. Nowhere do the entries in the treble and tenor II parts overlap with changes of note in the second tenor part, with the result that its triple-augmented entry is simply heard as a series of pedals, over which the upper parts have entries at the same relative pitches. There is really no more imitative artifice in this particular combination than there is in similar passages without the triple-augmented entry (e.g. bb. 58-9 and 71-4); rather than functioning as part of the imitative fabric of the piece, the augmented entry effectively acts as a *cantus firmus*.

Ex. 3.17. Contrasting treatment of augmented subject entries.

(a) Fantasia 4, bb. 14-18.

The musical score for Fantasia 4, measures 14-18, is presented in four staves. The key signature is G minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, as well as rests and accidentals. The score illustrates the contrasting treatment of augmented subject entries across the four parts.

(b) Fantasia 12, bb. 79-86.

The musical score for Fantasia 12, measures 79-86, is presented in four staves. The key signature is G minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, as well as rests and accidentals. The score illustrates the contrasting treatment of augmented subject entries across the four parts.

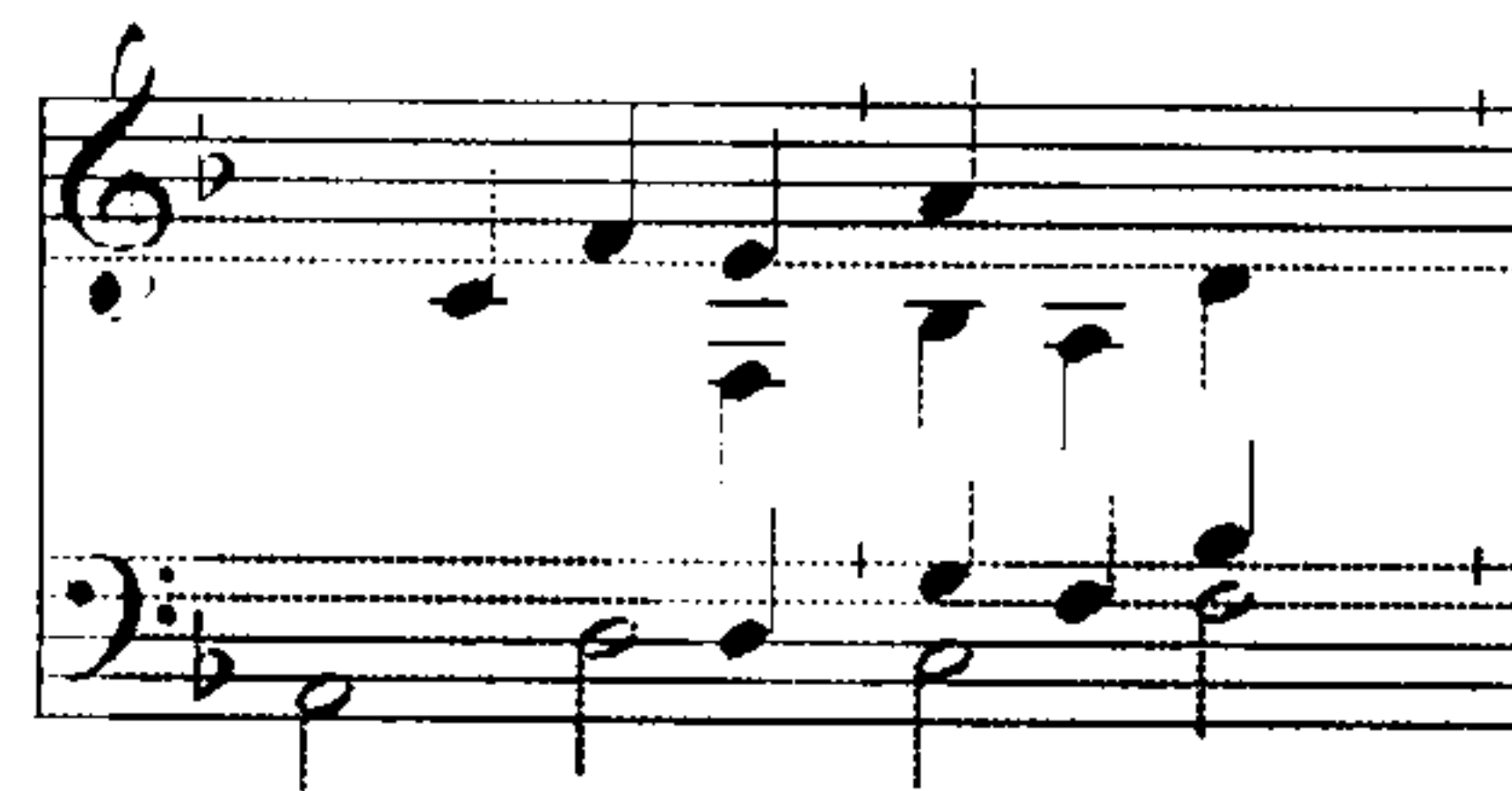
Purcell's apparent lack of interest in the exhaustive combination of the subject with itself in the last section of Fantasia 12, and indeed in the pursuit of more artificial combinations of the subject *per augmentation*, results from the difficulties of creating such imitations with this material. Whereas in the first section of Fantasia 8 the densest and most impressive combinations of fugal interlocks appear at climactic moments, designed to accentuate their status as moments of high artifice, the relatively understated positioning of the one passage of dense four-part *fugeing* in the last section of Fantasia 12 (bb. 74-6) underscores the problems Purcell had with its creation. This passage preserves the remnants of an attempt to combine prime and augmented fugal entries in all four parts, a process reconstructed in Ex. 3.18. There

Ex. 3.18. Possible derivation of bb. 75-6.

(a) Attempted two-voice combinations



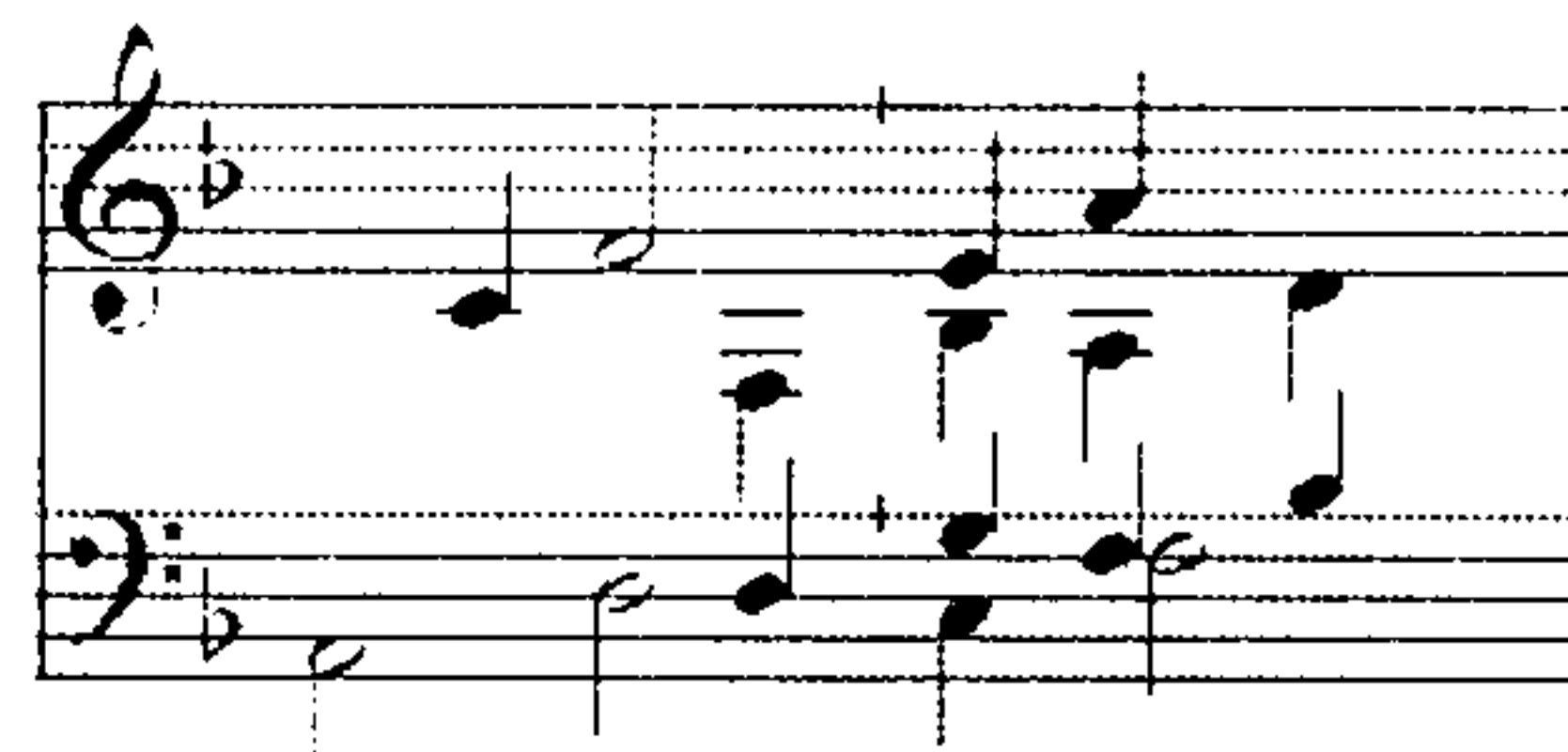
(b) Combined on one staff



(c) Treble corrected by doubling length of second note



(d) Last note of bass brought forward to eliminate fourth on second beat of second bar



(e) Alto entry stretched, transforming appoggiatura into properly-prepared suspension



(f) Final form of passage



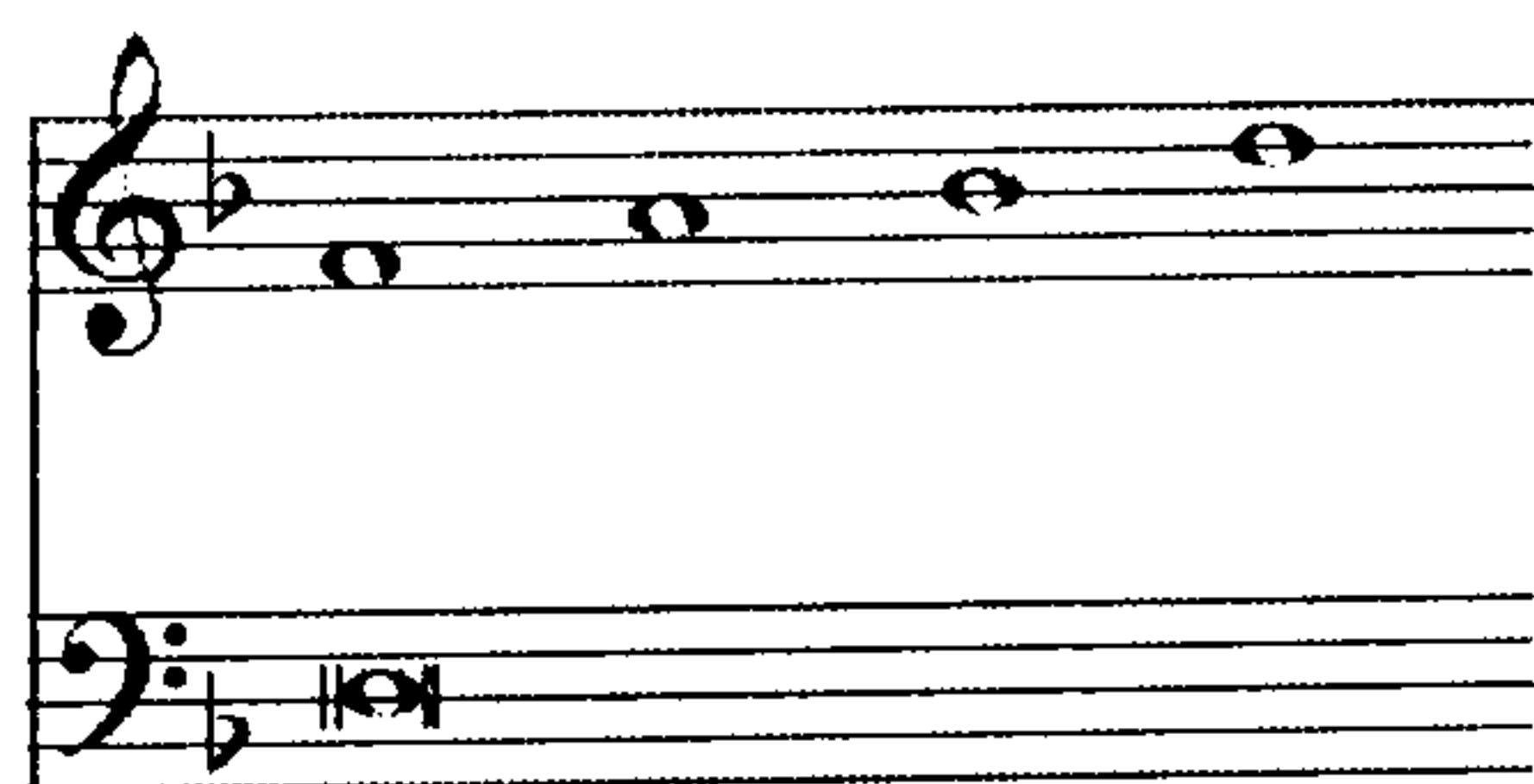
are in fact no intrinsically viable combinations of this subject material with its augmentation, so Purcell began by attempting to combine three of the least problematic into one larger four-part complex.

The difficulty Purcell had in contriving this passage only seems at odds with the techniques observed in Fantasias 6, 8 and 11 when viewed in isolation; from the point of view of his creative process, it simply indicates a difference in compositional priorities in this section right from the moment of the initial invention. In Fantasia 8, Purcell's intention to create a climactic four-voice interlock affected the very creation of the fugal materials, and all of the most artificial passages of *fugeing* could be seen to belong to the beginning of his compositional activity. Similarly, had Purcell intended to treat his material in this way in Fantasia 12 the process described in Ex. 3.18 could have had a different outcome, with the material itself taking shape around the desired imitative device. Instead, the qualities of the subject and the similarity with *cantus firmus* techniques suggest that it was the inclusion of grossly augmented subject entries that guided Purcell's earliest phase of composition in the last section of Fantasia 12. The subject is very short, so that it can be augmented without losing its melodic identity, and is obviously designed with a constantly sounding pedal in mind since it consists of each of the possible consonant notes to the conceptual pedal, arranged to facilitate the two-voice complex (A:A[↓] or T:T[↓]) that recurs throughout the section (Ex. 3.19). As it happens, this material is also another instance of Purcell's use of the same subject in several fantasias: its *thesin* form was used in the short, plangent section at bars 28³ to 32³ of Fantasia 9.

Harmonically, the pedal shown in Ex. 3.19b functions as the fifth of a local key note, thus creating the expectation of cadence. The relationship between pedal and subject entries in such passages remains constant, except in the few instances when

Ex. 3.19. Fantasia 12, closing section: derivation of subject.

(a) Possible consonant notes to a one-note *cantus firmus*.

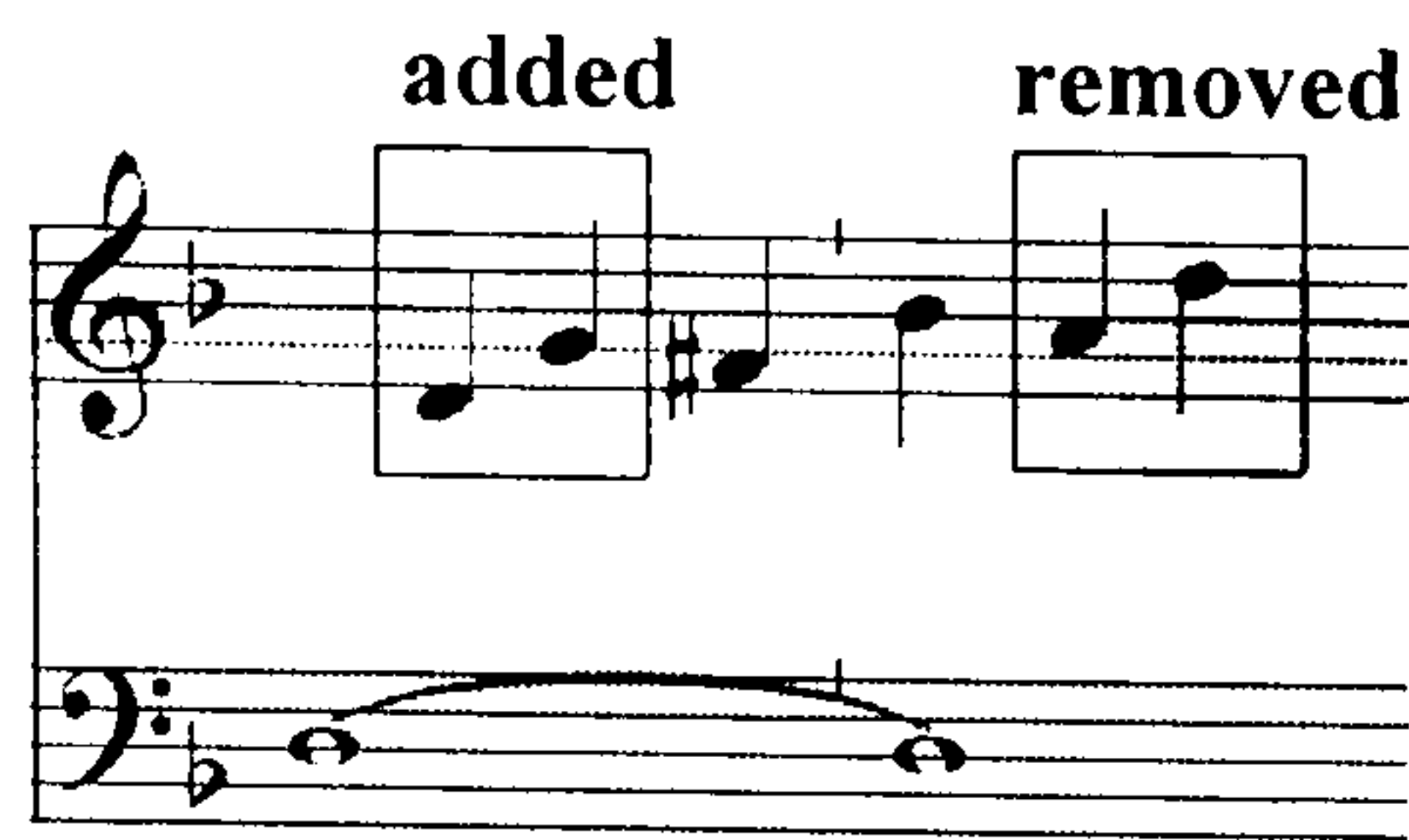


(b) Subject as in bb. 79-80.



Ex. 3.20. Alteration of relationship between pedal and subject entry.

(a) Method of accomplishment



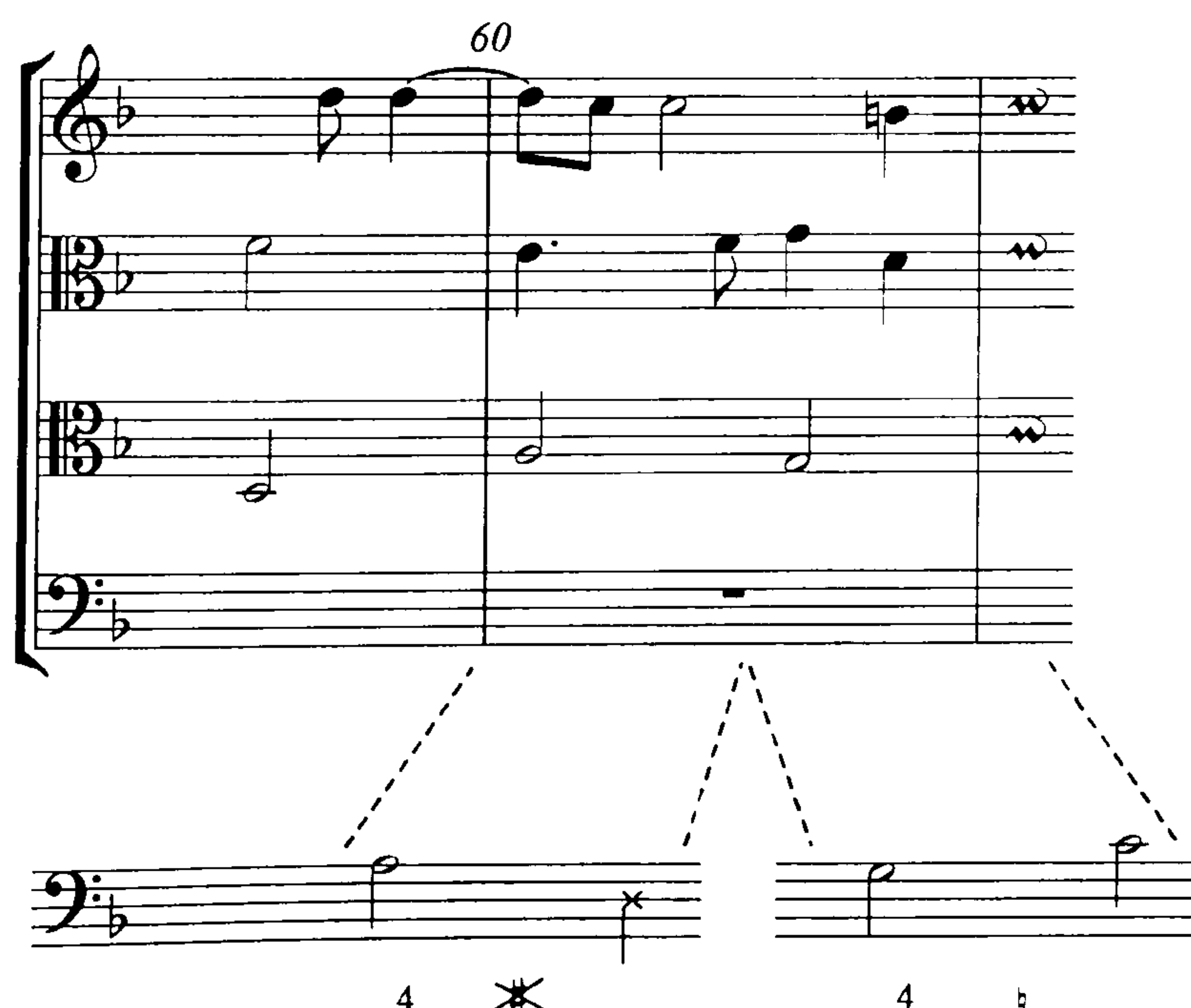
(b) As in bb. 83-4.



the subject is extended at the beginning and truncated at the end (thus retaining the same intervallic structure and harmonic implication; see Ex. 3.20). As a result, whenever he introduces the subject in an augmented form Purcell is able to use the surrounding counterpoint to create conventional cadence patterns. Three examples are given in Ex. 3.21, but the same principle applies throughout the section, and equally when the augmented entry appears in an upper voice. Purcell uses the very

Ex. 3.21. Fantasia 12, last section: harmonic treatment of augmented subject entries.

(a) *Arsin*, augmented.



(b) *Thesin*, double augmented.

62

4 # 7 # 6 #4 #5 * #5 # 6 #5 #

(c) *Arsin*, triple augmented.

78

||: 6 5 :|| 4 # 7 ||: b6 5 :|| 4 b b7 6 5 ||: b6 5 :|| 3 4 4 3 ||: b6 5 :|| 7 ||: b6 5 :|| 6 5 3 4 b4 3

progressions prescribed for cadences by Matthew Locke in his short thoroughbass manual *Melothesia*, published in 1673 (see Fig. 3.7a); indeed, his treatment of the double- and triple-augmented entries in Ex. 3.21b and c is strongly reminiscent of one of Locke's examples of 'transition' or modulation, in which a long series of breves progresses around a cycle of fifths, each harmonised with a variation on the same basic 7/3 – 6/4 – 5/3 pattern (Fig. 3.7c).¹⁸

Despite the strongly directional voice-leading supplied by this approach, it is the melodic shape of the subject that ultimately determines the harmonic trajectory of this section of Fantasia 12 rather than the realisation of cadential implications. Purcell uses

¹⁸ Matthew Locke, *Melothesia, or, Certain General Rules for Playing upon a Continued-Bass* (London: J. Carr, 1673). Locke's treatise is discussed in more detail on pp. 174-184 below.

supply a satisfactory cadence given the arrival on this inconvenient pitch so near to the end of the piece. The result is a kind of nested or overlapping palindrome in which the overall symmetry is both retained and obscured (see Ex. 3.22): the original palindrome is interrupted by the transposition of its second half down a third (B), but resumed on the arrival at a B natural (C).

The careful planning of the motivic basis for this final section offers a neat counterbalance both to its apparent disorder of harmonic implications and to Purcell's comparative lack of interest in artificial imitative complexes. Such an analysis reveals Purcell to be every bit as concerned with rigorous and systematic processes here as he is throughout his fantasias, but often not in the ways we might expect. The simple coexistence of inverted and augmented entries is not by itself enough to indicate a high degree of artifice, nor is it necessarily a mark of conservatism; indeed, over-concentration on these characteristics can result in the masking of other, potentially more interesting issues. Not least among these in Fantasia 12 is the experimental attitude towards the interrelationships between harmony and harmonic tension, subject material, and structure.

The techniques explored in this chapter find applications throughout Purcell's consort music, though not every piece will yield quite such striking results. There are also many passages and obvious stylistic features that are not specifically accounted for by such analytical approaches, although it is clear from the foregoing analyses that the use of imitative procedure as a way in to the study of creative process can lead to considerably wider insights. Far from offering an analytical 'machine' capable of revealing the 'secret' behind each composition, such methods represent practical points of departure for the close analysis of the music, which has remained all too often a minor concern of the literature. At the same time, they avoid some of the pitfalls of anachronistic terminology and analytical systems that I identified in Chapter 2. Each analysis reveals something of the way the music was composed, which in turn can tell us about what it was that Purcell valued in music: not conservative stylistic tendencies or superficial contrapuntal 'tricks', but artifice at a deep level that is fundamental to the very conception of each piece, thorough examination of musical resources, and creative use of the qualities of the material to produce particular harmonic effects and structural patterns.

CHAPTER 4

Sonata Fugues

CATCH AND CANZONA

In many respects the canzona enshrines in miniature the full range of issues behind the varied and contradictory reception of Purcell's instrumental music explored in Chapter 1. In particular, it brings into sharp focus the dichotomy between, on the one hand, those who wish to hear in Purcell's sonatas the echoes of a dying tradition of English consort music, and on the other, those for whom they sound a triumphant herald for the coming of the age of Bach and Handel.¹ Such clearly opposing views must surely engender suspicion: what is it about this music that makes it susceptible to such differing accounts, and how should we understand it if we wish to move outside the terms of the debate that has resulted in such a disjointed picture? In addressing Purcell's canzonas and related movements, this chapter departs from the study of *fugeing* to consider his compositional techniques in the group of works that make up the genre 'fugue' in his sonatas. I begin by examining the difference between this kind of writing and that explored in connection with the creative process in the fantasias, before going on to examine the role of thoroughbass as one of the most important factors in Purcell's engagement with the Italian sonata. While Purcell certainly understood the centrality of thoroughbass to the sonata idiom, his own sonatas transform its role from one of harmonic organisation to one of melodic invention. Purcell's extremely individual and creative response to this important aspect of the Italian style is highly consistent with his promotion of other forms of musical artifice elsewhere in his chamber music for strings, and indeed produces some of his most imaginative and virtuosic creations.

As I showed in Chapter 2, the apparent confusion in the Purcellian literature over just how Purcell's sonata fugues related to his interest in the more arcane forms of counterpoint in the fantasias is traceable right back to the composer's own treatment

¹ Bukofzer, *Baroque Era*, p. 214; Tilmouth, pp. 117-119.

of ‘fuge’ in ‘The Art of Descant’. The difference between the two approaches to ‘double descant’ shown in Fig. 2.1 (p. 90 above), the one a demonstration of *fugeing* and the other inserted to represent the Italian canzona, is undermined in Purcell’s commentary by his association of all of the kinds of fugal procedure he describes with the Italian sonata. While such features are certainly important aspects of his own sonatas, they are in fact rare in those of the Italian composers whom Purcell so warmly commends elsewhere in ‘The Art of Descant’. Peter Allsop, whose familiarity with this repertoire is almost unrivalled, considers such devices as augmentation, diminution, retrograde motion and inversion to be ‘hardly ever associated with the Italian “trio” sonata in the seventeenth century’.²

The issue of ‘double descant’ is particularly germane to the analysis of Purcell’s sonata fugues, since it is exactly the technique of the ‘Calista’ example (Fig. 2.1b) that he applies to almost all of his own canzonas. The second movement of 1683 Sonata 3 is a representative example: Purcell opens the movement with an extended passage of triple-invertible counterpoint built from a subject and two countersubjects, each introduced in turn and then redistributed among the parts at each repetition of the basic unit of three-part counterpoint.³

No theoretical work discusses the technique of composing such a movement. Its requirements are quite different from those of *fugeing*, however: whereas in the fantasias (and indeed in many sonata movements based on the same techniques) Purcell cultivates a densely woven contrapuntal structure in which harmonic and motivic elements are mutually inclusive, with local cadences occurring at irregular intervals and in often distant key areas, in his canzonas the relationship between material, harmony and phrasing is carefully controlled: subjects take on a fixed relationship to the harmony, and cadences coincide with the ends of the subjects, recurring at regular intervals of time throughout the (often long) first platforms. This is true for all of the movements Purcell called ‘canzona’, but is most obvious in those, like 1683 Sonata 3/ii, that adopt a strict triple-invertible texture. The result is a strong sense of hypermetre and a periodic repetition that would be completely out of place in any of the fantasias analysed in Chapter 3.

² Peter Allsop, *The Italian ‘Trio’ Sonata from its Origins until Corelli* (Oxford: OUP, 1992), p. 115.

³ Individual sonatas will not be introduced by ‘Z.’ number from this point forward; the twelve 1683 sonatas are ZZ. 790-801, and the ten 1697 sonatas, ZZ. 802-11.

There are two possible interpretations of this compositional technique. Helene Wessely-Kropik accounts for it by pointing out that Purcell's invertible counterpoint can often be understood (allowing for octave transposition) as a strict three-part canon.⁴ The corresponding implication of a high degree of compositional artifice neatly explains Purcell's interest in the techniques of the Colista-Lonati repertoire, and is also representative of contemporary understandings of 'double descant': as Rebecca Herissone observes, English theorists consistently associated invertible counterpoint with canon during the seventeenth century.⁵ This kind of canon, though, is far less artificial in terms of its degree of compositional difficulty than the canonic passages and even the imitative treatment found in the fantasias, since it is constructed over a periodically repeating harmonic background.

A much more representative model of Purcell's compositional technique in 1683 Sonata 3/ii is the catch, a popular genre among the patronage of London's taverns and clubs throughout the seventeenth century and beyond.⁶ Michael Tilmouth noted the similarity between the techniques of the two genres, remarking on the familiarity of the catch to contemporary audiences; in other words, the decrease in compositional effort (compared with the *fugeing* in the fantasias) is accompanied by a reduction in generic level, making such movements more accessible.⁷ In terms of the detail of compositional technique the analogy may be pushed even further, making clear Purcell's distinction between *fugeing* and his adoption of triple-invertible counterpoint in the sonata fugues.

Characteristically, Christopher Simpson was the only seventeenth-century author to describe the composition of catches in detail:

The contrivance [of a catch] is not intricate: for, if you compose any short Strain, of three or four Parts, setting them all within the ordinary compass of a Voice; and then place one Part at the end of another, in what order you please, so as they may aptly make one continued Tune; you have finished a Catch.⁸

In lieu of Simpson's rather perfunctory example, Ex. 4.1 shows Purcell's homage to the viol, 'Of all the instruments that are', which was briefly encountered in Chapter 1 (see p. 24 above) and is just one of more than fifty catches and rounds he composed in

⁴ WK, p. 112.

⁵ Herissone, *Music Theory*, pp. 197-98.

⁶ John Harley, *Music in Purcell's London* (London: Dobson, 1968), pp. 141-43; on Purcell's catches, see Holman, pp. 29-31.

⁷ Tilmouth/Field, 'Consort Music II', p. 272.

⁸ Simpson, p. 143.

Ex. 4.1. ‘Of all the instruments that are’ (catch in three parts).

Of all, all the in - stru - ments, all, all, all the in - stru - ments that

Mark, mark, mark, mark how the strings, how the strings their or - der

But a - bove all, all, all, all, all, all, this still a -

are, None, none, none, none, none, none,

keep, With a whet, whet, whet, whet, whet, whet,

bounds, With a zin - gle, zin - gle, zin - gle, zin - gle,

none, none, none, none, none, with the vi - ol can com - pare;

whet, whet, whet, whet, whet, whet, whet and a sweep, sweep, sweep.

zin - gle, zin - gle, zin - gle, zin - gle, zing and a zit - zan - zounds.

his lifetime. As performed, the voices enter successively with the same melody, continuing in counterpoint with the following entries until all the parts have entered, whereupon the cycle repeats itself. The resultant structure is shown in Table 4.1.

In terms of compositional technique, catches like ‘Of all the instruments that are’ provide a useful model for Purcell’s canzonas, in direct contrast to the *fugeing* of his fantasias. The first sixteen bars of 1683 Sonata 3/ii are clearly conceived in exactly the same way as ‘Of all the instruments that are’: the whole creative process consisted of devising the three-part passage of counterpoint shown in Ex. 4.2. Having done so, all that was left for Purcell to do was to bring in the successive parts on the subject,

Table 4.1. Structure of a three-part catch (numbers represent the three strains of the melody).

Voice 1:	1	2		:	3	1	2	:		3		
Voice 2:		1		:	2	3	1	:		2	3	
Voice 3:				:	1	2	3	:		1	2	3

Repeat ad lib.

Ex. 4.2. 1683 Sonata 3/ii, canzona: three-part fugal complex.

COUNTERSUBJECT I:

COUNTERSUBJECT II:

SUBJECT:

transposing every second cycle of the complex to the fifth of the key. The resulting structure of the first platform of the sonata, shown in Table 4.2, is almost identical to that of the catch (compare Table 4.1), demonstrating clearly the strong sense of hypermetrical repetition that makes this technique so different from *fugeing*.

The one important difference between the canzona and the catch, however, is that the catch is written in three voices of equal range. In the sonata movement, by contrast, the occupation of a lower range by the bass viol part means that in order for the rotation of the parts to work the complex must be triple-invertible, since all three of the parts must be capable of functioning as a bass. Just as he later did in his example of ‘double descant’ in ‘The Art of Descant’, Purcell uses three different permutations of the material in 1683 Sonata 3/ii in order to demonstrate this property; his omission of the remaining three results from the linear succession of subject and two countersubjects in each part, one reason why such passages of ‘double descant’ could be called a form of canon by Purcell and Simpson.

Purcell’s attachment to this technique is borne out by its extraordinary frequency in his sonatas: it pervades not only the canzonas but indeed all of the fast fugal movements, including those in dance-like triple metres. As well as using ‘double descant’ at the octave as in 1683 Sonata 3/ii, he incorporated invertible counterpoint at the twelfth on several occasions when it offered more melodic potential (Ex. 4.3; see also 1683 Sonatas 3/v and 8/iii, and 1697 Sonatas 2/v and 9/v). ‘Double descant’ counterpoint at intervals other than the octave seems to have been a comparatively rare phenomenon by the 1680s. Simpson, like Purcell later in *The Art of Descant*,

Table 4.2. 1683 Sonata 3/ii: structure of opening 16 bars

Transposition	-	+5	-	+5	-	+5	-	+5
vln I	S	CS I	CS II	S	CS I	CS II	S	CS I
vln II		S	CS I	CS II	S	CS I	CS II	S
bass			S	CS I	CS II	S	CS I	CS II

Ex. 4.3. 1697 Sonata 7/iv: ‘double descant’ at the twelfth.

(a) Original complex.

Original complex musical score for the double descant at the twelfth. It consists of three staves: CS II (top), CS I (middle), and S (bottom). The S part features a complex, fast-moving line with many sixteenth notes. The CS I and CS II parts are more melodic and slower.

(b) Rotation of parts.

Rotated musical score for the double descant at the twelfth. The parts are rearranged: CS I is now the top staff, S (+8) is the middle staff, and CS II (-5) is the bottom staff. The S (+8) part is now the most complex and fast-moving line, while the other parts are more melodic.

had described only ‘double descant’ at the octave in his *Compendium*, and one has to go back to Morley’s *Plaine and Easie Introduction* of 1597 to find a theoretical discussion of invertible counterpoint at the twelfth and at the tenth.⁹

Purcell’s adoption of a technique in the canzonas that, as Tilmouth noted, was so much easier in terms of compositional effort, and so much ‘lower’ with respect to genre as a result, seems potentially to undermine the idea of his promotion of artifice in the instrumental music. As ever, though, his discussion of ‘fuge’ in ‘The Art of Descant’ can help to provide some of the necessary context. That Purcell alluded to the importance of the sonata at all in his treatise was something of a departure for English musical theorists: like Simpson, most earlier authors had resorted to fantasia as the genre of choice for illustrating fugal techniques.¹⁰ By the early 1690s, however, when Purcell would have been writing his contribution to Playford’s *Introduction*, Corelli’s sonatas were approaching the height of their popularity in London, and the English fantasia was all but forgotten. It would have seemed entirely natural that Purcell should have chosen to address ‘fuge’ with reference to the sonata, providing examples in the trio scoring of two trebles and bass (as all in his three-part examples), and quoting from the latest Italian composers. What is more surprising,

⁹ Morley, *Introduction*, pp. 105-07.

¹⁰ Simpson, p. 115.

then, is that Purcell did not go further: of all the Italian composers of trio sonatas, he chose to quote not Corelli, whose sonatas were fast becoming the *locus classicus* of the modern style, but ‘Calista’, an older composer whose example exhibits far stricter contrapuntal working than almost any of Corelli’s fugal movements.

Superficially, the two approaches are similar, especially when viewed from a modern-day vantage point that understands the later keyboard fugues of J.S. Bach as the standard by which to judge all other fugal compositions. For those who understand Purcell’s canzonas as an early example of the mature fugal procedure of the later Baroque, his works share with the fugal movements of both Colista and Corelli many of the defining features of that style: a clear-cut exposition with entries of subject followed by answer at the fifth, and – despite Tilmouth’s statement to the contrary – a concern to avoid stretti until all the voices have entered with the principal subject(s).¹¹ If Purcell’s fugues do not compare favourably with the apparently paradigmatic examples of Bach or Handel, or even of Corelli, so the argument goes, it is because Purcell’s counterpoint lacks the expansiveness to confer variety of harmony and phrasing, relying instead on the permutational exploration of invertible counterpoint, easily dismissed as ‘mere mechanistic juggling’.¹²

The logical ramifications of this argument, however, are entirely untenable, since Purcell shows himself abundantly capable of expanding and varying the harmonic and metrical qualities of a phrase elsewhere, not least in 1683 Sonata 1/i (see Chapter 2). The techniques familiar from later repertoires, such as sequential expansion, evasion of cadence and the extension of voice-leading patterns, are all present in Purcell’s other sonata movements (and indeed in the canzona movements, after the exposition) and would therefore have been available to him in these sections too. That he chose not to use them in favour of the strict invertible counterpoint found in movements like the D minor canzona should clearly be taken as a conscious decision on Purcell’s part, therefore, and not as a deficiency of compositional technique. The resulting regularity of phrasing and cadence may jar with modern, post-Bach tastes – it certainly did with Burney and Hawkins in the eighteenth century – but to dismiss the movements on these grounds entirely misses the point that Purcell favoured such techniques not for their repetition or regularity, but for the artifice which gave rise to it. While this is

¹¹ Tilmouth, pp. 118-19.

¹² Adams, pp. 35, 112.

certainly less labour-intensive than the *fugeing* of the fantasias, it is inherently more artificial than a fugue that employs no regular countersubject at all.

Purcell was not alone in his promotion of invertible counterpoint as a means of raising the intensity of contrapuntal artifice in the latest instrumental styles. Indeed, his examples in the sonatas are closely contemporary with the development of the so-called 'permutation fugue' in Germany, and may therefore be understood as part of a wider interest on the part of northern-European musicians in the retention of more learned techniques in this new context. While it is not possible to demonstrate any direct connection between Purcell's works and those of the German composers who shared this interest, it is nevertheless instructive to compare the two approaches.

The term 'permutation fugue' is a modern one, invented to describe a fugue constructed from between three and six melodic units in which the voices enter successively alternating between tonic and dominant, with each voice presenting the melodic units in the same order in invertible counterpoint; in other words, the very same structural principle followed by Purcell.¹³ The best-known examples are the early choral fugues of J. S. Bach, such as the opening chorus of *Himmelskönig, sei willkommen* (BWV182), but Paul Walker has traced the origins of this approach to a small group of composers working in Hamburg and Lübeck during the 1660s and 1670s, for whom Zarlino's explanation of invertible counterpoint in *Le institutioni harmoniche* (as transmitted to them in the writings of Sweelinck) assumed paramount structural importance in the context of fugal composition.¹⁴

For Walker, the presence of this technique in the early choral works of J. S. Bach suggests that the very notion of fugue as a genre is in need of revision. Twentieth-century commentators, he observes, questioned the fugal status of the permutation fugue on structural grounds (particularly the lack of episodes) and because of its foundation on multiple themes; 'a set of requirements distilled by many generations of theorists from a small sampling of late-baroque fugal writing'.¹⁵ By contrast, contemporary theorists would have been quick to recognise such works as fugues. If, then, the characteristics of the genre are extended to admit Bach's

¹³ See, for example, Carl Dahlhaus, 'Zur Geschichte der Permutationsfuge', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 46 (1959), 95-116 (p. 95).

¹⁴ Paul Mark Walker, 'The Origin of the Permutation Fugue', in *The Creative Process*, Studies in the History of Music, iii (New York: Broude Brothers, 1992), 51-91 (esp. p. 56).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91; see also pp. 56, 90.

examples, this would also release Purcell's canzonas from the common analytical comparison with later paradigms discussed above.

Walker points out certain features of the permutation fugue (in particular the presence of a regular, invertible countersubject) in the sonatas of Johann Adam Reincken's *Hortus Musicus* of 1688, but identifies the first 'true' permutation fugues among the movements of the three sonatas at the end of Johann Theile's *Musikalisches Kunstbuch*.¹⁶ Although this manuscript treatise is dated 1691, Carl Dahlhaus suggests that its contents were composed in the period 1675-85, placing them potentially very close indeed to the period in which Purcell must have written his sonatas.¹⁷

In observing how Bach's permutation fugues demonstrate an 'ability to transform Theile's dry, pedantic model into effective music', Walker also pinpoints the principal difference between Theile's examples and the canzonas by Purcell and Lonati examined thus far in this study.¹⁸ Of Theile's three sonatas, the second is the most directly comparable with Purcell's, as it adopts 'trio' scoring and contains two permutation fugues. The first of these is based on the triple-invertible complex in Ex. 4.4, and treated according to exactly the same structural principle as is shown in Table 4.2; as in Purcell's 1697 Sonata 7/iv, two parts are invertible at the octave, and the third (here countersubject II) inverts at the twelfth whenever it must function as a bass (bb. 23-28, 39-45). Here, however, the similarity stops. Theile uses this material to construct the whole of his fugue, without any episodes or free material until the final five bars, which he adds to provide an effective conclusion based on a more homophonic working of the motivic ideas from his subjects. By contrast, both Purcell and Lonati only use this principle to create the first platforms of their canzonas, thereafter exploring other combinations of the material, and harmonic expansion through episodes. Even more noticeably, the material itself is radically different in character: whereas Purcell uses a short passage of counterpoint with clear harmonic implications, Theile's triple-invertible complex is both longer and less harmonically driven.

¹⁶ Walker, *Theories of Fugue*, pp. 207-8, 232-34.

¹⁷ Johann Theile, *Musikalisches Kunstbuch*, ed. Carl Dahlhaus, *Denkmäler norddeutscher Musik*, vol. 1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1965), p. viii.

¹⁸ Walker, 'Permutation Fugue', p. 87.

Ex. 4.4. Johann Theile, *Musikalisches Kunstbuch*: Sonata [II] à 3, first movement. Triple-invertible complex (as in bars 12-17).



Much of the ‘dry, pedantic’ character Walker perceives in this music results from the strictures of composing a three-part complex that could be melodically inverted in its entirety, an audacious feat that provides the material for a second permutation fugue in bars 63-115 of the same sonata. At the same time, though, the contrast with the subject material of Purcell’s canzonas, which share a harmonic directness with that of the ‘Calista’ example he quoted in ‘The Art of Descant’, strongly suggests that it was the Italian examples that Purcell had in mind when composing his own fugues. A large collection of Italian trio sonatas is known to have been in circulation in England in the early 1680s, and among these works are eleven sonatas by Colista and Lonati which contain no fewer than six movements with permutational expositions in triple-invertible counterpoint, and a further four that incorporate similar structural principles despite having only two fully invertible subjects.¹⁹

By contrast, there is no evidence to suggest that Purcell would have known Theile’s *Musikalisches Kunstbuch* or indeed any of the works Walker cites in connection with the origins of the permutation fugue in Germany. No music by either Theile or Reincken survives in contemporary English copies, and there is no known connection between these composers and any of the German musicians working in England in the second half of the seventeenth century.²⁰ Two musicians in particular had connections with Schleswig-Holstein: the viol player Theodore (Dietrich) Steffkin (d. 1673), a member of the private music under both Charles I and Charles II, spent two years in Hamburg in the 1650s, while the virtuoso violinist Thomas Baltzar (?1631-63) was a native of Lübeck; viol player August Kühnel, also from Saxony, is

¹⁹ For the group of Italian sonatas and their dissemination see *PM*, pp. 109-25 (esp. Table 3.10, p. 111). The sonatas by Lonati and Colista are not all published, but the scores in London, British Library Add. MS 33236 are available on microfilm: *English Music Manuscripts c.1640-1714, Section B*, The Music Manuscript Collection of the British Library, London [microfilm, 203 reels], part 4 (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press Microform Publications, 1983), reel 27.

²⁰ On German musicians working in England see J. A. Westrup, ‘Foreign Musicians in Stuart England’, *Musical Quarterly*, 27, (1941), 70-89 (pp. 81-3, 88-9).

not known to have visited England for the first time until 1682. While it is true that any of these three might possibly have known of the music of the Hamburg composers and communicated it to England, it is important to note that each of them held very different positions in Germany when compared with the composers identified by Walker with the beginnings of the permutation fugue. While Theile was a court *Kappelmeister* for most of his life, his older colleagues Buxtehude, Matthias Weckmann and Reincken were all organists and composers of sacred music, and Christoph Bernhard was a singer and later civic director of church music in Hamburg; all were known for their important contributions to sacred music and mastery of strict composition. By contrast, Steffkin (and his sons Frederick William (1646–1709) and Christian Leopold (d. 1714), both of whom served the Restoration court as violists), Baltzar and Kühnel were all virtuoso performers by trade, and the few works that survive them very much reflect this in their emphasis on flamboyant ornamentation rather than erudite contrapuntal textures.

The lack of any demonstrable connection does not mask the striking similarity of purpose behind the two developments, however. Purcell's cultivation of permutational expositions as a more artificial manifestation of the Italian sonata is just one consequence of an aspect of that style that has arguably been overlooked in studies of Italian instrumental music that emphasise the dominance of Corelli from the early 1680s. Far from ending with Purcell, similar structural principles continued to inform the fugal writing of Italian composers in this period, as shown in the op. 1 sonatas of Tomaso Albinoni, published in Venice in 1694.²¹ It seems that Bach was not the first composer to succeed in exploiting the theoretical possibilities of permutational writing in a practical context. Indeed, the fact that Bach composed fugues on four of the subjects from Albinoni's op. 1 shows that Theile's cannot have been the only examples of permutational fugues with which he was familiar, suggesting that Walker's understanding of the origins of the procedure in Bach's music might be only partially complete. This aside, the picture that emerges is one of a widely spread interest, throughout Europe, in the possibilities of invertible counterpoint in a fugal context, and it was an identical impulse that led Purcell to recommend this particular

²¹ See Michael Talbot, *Tomaso Albinoni: the Venetian Composer and his World* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), p. 86. A further sonata attributed to Albinoni, known only in a manuscript copy at Durham Cathedral, contains a movement that explores the permutations of no fewer than five subjects (*Ibid.*, pp. 92-4).

aspect of the sonata style to readers of ‘The Art of Descant’, in terms so strikingly similar to Simpson’s description of the fantasia in the previous generation. In so doing, he not only advocated the adoption of the Italian style, as has been read so often into his preface to the 1683 Sonatas, but proposed a strategy for the survival of strict contrapuntal artifice in its context.

The group of sonata movements addressed in this chapter extends beyond those that Purcell called ‘canzona’ to include nearly all of the fast fugal movements in the 1683 and 1697 sets. Several movements that Purcell labelled ‘canzona’ do not incorporate triple-invertible counterpoint at all, especially in cases where the subjects are worked in ‘double fuge’ from the start (see Ex. 4.5), while the many dance-like fugues that do use the catch-like constructive principle with triple-invertible counterpoint cannot properly be called ‘canzonas’ due to their triple metre. What unites these movements, however, is the genre-based notion of fugue described in Chapter 2, and in particular the coincidence of motivic and harmonic periods that produces the kind of periodic organisation seen in 1683 Sonata 3/ii. Furthermore, all of these fugues share common origins in terms of the derivation of their fugal materials, an observation that leads into the role of thoroughbass in the sonata style.

Ex. 4.5. Fast sonata fugues incorporating ‘double fuge’ from the outset.

(a) 1683 Sonata 4, canzona: opening platform (arrows indicate invertible counterpoint).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for 1683 Sonata 4, canzona. The first system, starting at measure 24, shows the opening platform with invertible counterpoint indicated by arrows. The second system, starting at measure 28, continues the piece. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first system ends with a measure number 6, and the second system ends with measure numbers 2, 6, 6, and 7.

(b) 1697 Sonata 8, canzona: opening platform.

(c) 1697 Sonata 5, canzona: opening platform.

THOROUGHBASS AND THE INVENTION OF FUGAL MATERIALS

The three-voice invertible complex that is the basis of the first sixteen bars of 1683 Sonata 3/ii is an elaboration of a simple progression involving a series of 7-6 suspensions over a stepwise descent in the bass. Not only, therefore, is Purcell's fugal procedure in this piece differentiated from that of the fantasias by its reliance on a permutational approach to invertible counterpoint, but it also exhibits an almost antithetical approach to the relationship between its fugal materials and the underlying harmony. In the fantasias examined in Chapter 3 the subject material certainly had harmonic implications, but these were incipient rather than explicit; in the course of a passage of *fugeing* Purcell manipulated the many different combinations of entries to draw on, and even generate multiple harmonic contexts. In the D minor canzona (1683 Sonata 3/ii), by contrast, the subject material is itself a melodic particularisation of a specific underlying progression, a kind of generalised harmonic fragment that exists prior to the subject itself.

This canzona is by no means unique in this respect; indeed, the other fugue with a ‘catch-like’, triple invertible opening platform cited above (1697 Sonata 7/iv; see Ex. 4.3) is founded on the very same progression. Viewed together, furthermore, Purcell’s sonata fugues all rely on standard, replicable thoroughbass progressions to a greater or lesser extent. The fact that, in spite of this, Purcell is able to imbue these materials with such melodic individuality is testimony to his skilful use of the techniques of division that were so important to the English instrumental tradition, techniques that are seldom invoked in discussions of the trio sonata. While the catch provides a useful model for the structural and imitative procedures of the first platforms of these fugues, therefore, it is thoroughbass and division techniques that will shed light on Purcell’s process of melodic invention.

Purcell’s treatment of thoroughbass in the sonatas of 1683 and 1697 has received a great deal of attention from commentators on contemporary and modern performance practice. The conventional view, as stated, for example, by Bukofzer, was that it was one of the defining differences between Purcell’s fantasias and sonatas.²² With increasing recognition that instrumental music had been accompanied at the organ throughout the seventeenth century, however, came the realisation that the presence of the continuo part in the *Sonnatas of Three Parts* may have been more cosmetic than practical. Since both fantasias and sonatas were apparently performed with organ accompaniment, Purcell’s last-minute provision of a separate continuo part seemed little more than an Italianate affectation designed to make the sonatas seem more up to date, and was unlikely in itself to have resulted in any difference in performance practice.²³

The addition of the continuo part as an afterthought does not imply, however, that Purcell’s compositional technique was not informed by a deep familiarity with thoroughbass procedure. English musicians had long been familiar with the requisite skills to provide an improvised accompaniment to vocal and instrumental music, reading from scores, keyboard reductions or separate thoroughbass parts, very often unfigured.²⁴ The latter in particular requires a strong awareness of idiom and

²² Bukofzer, *Baroque Era*, p. 213.

²³ Dart, ‘Purcell’s Chamber Music’, pp. 82-84; Kolneder, ‘Der Generalbass in der Triosonaten von Purcell’, p. 293; see also p. 62 above.

²⁴ For a summary of the history of thoroughbass in England, see Peter Holman, “‘Evenly, Softly, and Sweetly Acchording to All’: The Organ Accompaniment of English Consort Music”, in *John Jenkins*

compositional technique, since the performer is essentially required to make an informed guess as to the harmonic intentions of the composer based solely on the behaviour of the bass part and his own stylistic awareness. Not surprisingly, then, it was to this skill that a large part of the advice contained in contemporary thoroughbass manuals related. Two such works by Restoration authors are extant: Matthew Locke's *Melothesia* (1673), and John Blow's unpublished 'Rules for playing of a Through Bass upon Organ & Harpsicon.' (thought to date from the late 1670s).²⁵

Of the two, Locke's treatise is of particular interest, given his concern to demonstrate that the skills required in order to accompany a singer or instrumentalist from a thoroughbass part at the keyboard were also extremely valuable as compositional techniques. In the concluding remarks to *Melothesia*, he observed that, by following his rules, the musically competent student would not only be able to accompany a solo or ensemble performance, but would also 'with much ease arrive to the use of the first Rudiments of *Musick*'. Indeed, the study of the final examples 'by way of transition' would take him further: 'being truly understood and applied, [they] will (in my Opinion) acquaint him with *All that's Teachable* as to matter of *Ayr*; the rest intirely depending on his Ingenuity, Observation, and Study'.²⁶ Hence the title of Locke's little treatise, which explicitly recalls the preface to the English translation of Descartes's *Compendium of Musick* in which the author lists the necessary attributes of the modern musician: he must be a mathematician, a geometrist, a mechanic, and 'A *Melothetic*: to lay down a demonstrative method for the Composing, or Setting, of all Tunes, and Ayres'.²⁷ Clearly the teaching of thoroughbass techniques formed an important part of Restoration musical pedagogy, and given that both Locke and Blow have demonstrable links to Purcell's education (see p. 41 above), it seems highly likely that study of either or both of their tutors would have formed part of his musical training.

and his time: *Studies in English Consort Music*, ed. Andrew Ashbee and Peter Holman (Oxford: OUP, 1996), pp. 353-82 (pp. 353-368).

²⁵ Locke, *Melothesia* (see pp. 155-157 above). Blow's treatise is contained in London, British Library Add. MS 34072, fols 1-5; it is transcribed in Franck Thomas Arnold, *The Art of Accompaniment from a Thorough-Bass as Practised in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, 2 vols (Oxford: OUP, 1931; repr. New York: Dover, 1965), pp. 163-72.

²⁶ Locke, *Melothesia*, p. 8.

²⁷ *Renatus Des-Cartes Excellent Compendium of Musick: with Necessary and Judicious Animadversions thereupon. By a Person of Honour* (London: Thomas Harper, 1653), [viii].

The idea of thoroughbass as an element of compositional technique is familiar from eighteenth-century music; indeed, Locke's comments on the relationship of thoroughbass to composition in general are almost identical to the quotation from J. S. Bach with which Joel Lester opens his chapter on 'Thoroughbass Methods' in his book *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century*.²⁸ Lester's survey of eighteenth-century approaches to composition through thoroughbass techniques is worth dwelling on for a moment, since it offers a brief summary of the ways in which thoroughbass theories could inform the act of composition.

According to Lester, thoroughbass treatises from the late seventeenth century onwards adumbrate four methods for dealing with unfigured bass parts, which in turn are representative of the kinds of procedures followed during composition:

Specific chords might be placed over a given solmization syllable or an easily identified note, such as a sharped [*sic*] note. Specific chords might be applied to various patterns of bass intervals. Model bass lines with chords might be learned by rote to be used wherever applicable. Or specific chords might be placed over particular scale degrees.²⁹

Although Lester deals with each of these methods, it is clear that he regards them as successive improvements to compositional technique, rather than complementary elements of the same approach. The first method, for example, he illustrates using examples from Lorenzo Penna's 1672 *Li Primi Albori Musicale*, which demonstrate the harmonisation of the solmisation syllable *mi* (i.e. the lower note of a rising semitone), or of any sharpened note, with a 6/3, rather than a 5/3.³⁰ The same principles inform the first part of Locke's 'second rule', the remainder of which (concerning the identification and proper harmonisation of cadences) also falls within Lester's first method of handling an unfigured bass.³¹

Despite acknowledging that such rules hold in a large number of cases, Lester criticises Penna's approach for failing to account satisfactorily for minor keys or for keys with many sharps.³² These criticisms themselves are less solid than they seem at

²⁸ Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 49: 'Thoroughbass is the beginning of composing; indeed, it may be called an extemporaneous composition'.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70; Penna's treatise is available in a facsimile of the 1684 edition (Bologna: Forni, 1969).

³¹ Locke, *Melothesia*, p. 6.

³² Lester, *Compositional Theory*, pp. 70-71.

first: while the third degree of a minor key is given a sixth in later practice, it often receives a fifth in the mid- and even the late-seventeenth century. Surely, furthermore, a musician of Penna's calibre would have recognised that his rules were subject to the necessary transposition implied by the key signature.³³

By observing such shortcomings, nevertheless, Lester prepares the way for what he understands as their resolution in the thoroughbass literature of the eighteenth century: the fourth of his methods of treating unfigured basses, under which he discusses Champion's *règle de l'octave* and its subsequent adoption and revision by almost all theorists of thoroughbass from the 1730s onwards.³⁴ As he acknowledges, such methods would very likely have been largely unintelligible to earlier musicians, since they rely on the association of chords with particular scale steps within a given key context. This is not the only way in which the principles of thoroughbass can be intelligible, however. Rather it stems from Lester's conviction, expressed earlier in his chapter, that 'in all thoroughbass methods, the bass is the foundation of the harmony and chords are discrete vertical units that follow one another' (my emphasis).³⁵ Restated more forcefully, Lester holds that

Thoroughbass writers dealt with harmonies as units built above the bass. By abandoning the earlier tenor orientation and by viewing harmonies as units instead of as combinations of intervals, they came closer to the modern perspective of a chord with rearrangeable, octave-equivalent members.³⁶

Such an obviously post-Rameau understanding of harmony is, however, entirely unsatisfactory when dealing with seventeenth-century music, and with contemporary thoroughbass treatises such as those of Penna, Locke and Blow; indeed, it is questionable whether it is even representative of later practice. This is because it disregards the extent to which harmony can be understood as progression independently of tonal context. Such an approach to thoroughbass belongs mainly to

³³ See p. 102 above; a piece in F \sharp minor would have three sharps signifying transposition down a minor third from A minor; as a result, the bass notes F \sharp , C \sharp and G \sharp all function as 'natural' notes (and thus take a fifth) as they are analogous to A, E and B in A minor.

³⁴ The *règle* was first discussed in François Champion, *Traité d'Accompagnement et de Composition selon la Règle des Octaves de la Musique* (Paris: [n. pub.], 1716; repr. Geneva: Minkoff, 1976); its influence on later thoroughbass theory is charted in Thomas Christenson, 'The "Règle de l'Octave" in Thorough-Bass Theory and Practice', *Acta Musicologica*, 64 (1992), 91-117 pp. 91-117).

³⁵ Lester, *Compositional Theory*, p. 52.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

the second and third of Lester's identified techniques for the realisation of unfigured basses (those involving the implication of particular realisations by specific patterns of intervals in the bass), which are curiously neglected in his discussion.

The ability of thoroughbass to account for contrapuntally driven progressions irrespective of harmonic context is demonstrated by Locke's sixth and seventh 'rules'. Here Locke proposes a number of different progressions which, as he says, can be applied whenever a bass part behaves consistently in a particular manner:

6. If many *Notes* of the same length immediately ascend one after another, the common *Descant* is a Fifth and Sixth upon every one, or most of them: And if many descend in the like manner, the *Descant* is to be a Sixth and Fifth, or a Seventh and Sixth, on each of them [...]
7. When a *Bass* moves by Thirds, the common *Descant* is a Sixth on every other Note.³⁷

Although the examples Locke gives are of course notated in a particular key, his text makes it clear that these rules are to be applied whenever a bass behaves in the manner described; the resulting chords, although they must be adapted to the prevailing key, make sense only in the context of the surrounding progression, which overrides the considerations of harmony when considered as a unit above a given bass note. The result is a form of generalised counterpoint that can be imported wholesale on the recognition of these bass patterns in performance.

Such an approach is equally applicable (and even advantageous), by extension, to composition. The progressions are both simple to produce and easily apprehended by the listener, since they involve easily recognisable patterns. Not only could they be used in any key, but they could even be used to effect a logical modulation between different key areas by making chromatic alterations to the notes, thereby changing the key context without damaging the integrity of the progression: 'Applying the Sixes in each Introduction, as if you were really in the *Key*, you are going to', as Locke puts it.³⁸ Purcell uses a 7-6 progression in exactly this way in the first movement of 1697 Sonata 2, interrupting an expected cadence on E \flat in order to modulate to C minor (Ex. 4.6); this use of progressions at moments of harmonic and melodic digression was also common in the Italian repertoire. In Purcell's fast fugal

³⁷ Locke, *Melothesia*, p. 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Ex. 4.6. 1697 Sonata 2/i: use of 7-6 progression to modulate.


The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature has two flats. The bass line is annotated with figured bass notation: 5, 4/2, [5], 6, 6, 7, 6, 7, 6, 7, 6.

movements, however, such ‘episodic’ use of basic thoroughbass progressions is less common: instead, Purcell used thoroughbass progressions as the very basis of his invention of fugal materials. Both 1683 Sonata 3/ii and 1697 Sonata 7/iv, the two works whose expositions were examined above, have triple-invertible complexes founded on this very same 7-6 progression.

Although he does not say so explicitly, Locke presents his thoroughbass progressions in a particular order that demonstrates their derivation from a basic underlying succession of 6/3 harmonies over a scalar bass. In so doing, he demonstrates the link between the successive progressions and forms a logical sequence in which the student could learn them, in order of their increasing complexity when compared with the original succession of parallel sixths: interpolating fifths and then sevenths over the same bass, and finally dividing it into unfolded thirds and giving the consequences for the realisation. Ex. 4.7 follows the same pattern of increasing elaboration from the basic models to show the importance of these very progressions in Purcell’s sonata fugues.

Ex. 4.7. Canzonas and other fast fugal movements: subject material compared with progressions found in Locke’s *Melothesia* and Blow’s ‘Rules’.

Precept 1: Blow, ‘Rules’, [ex. 4].³⁹

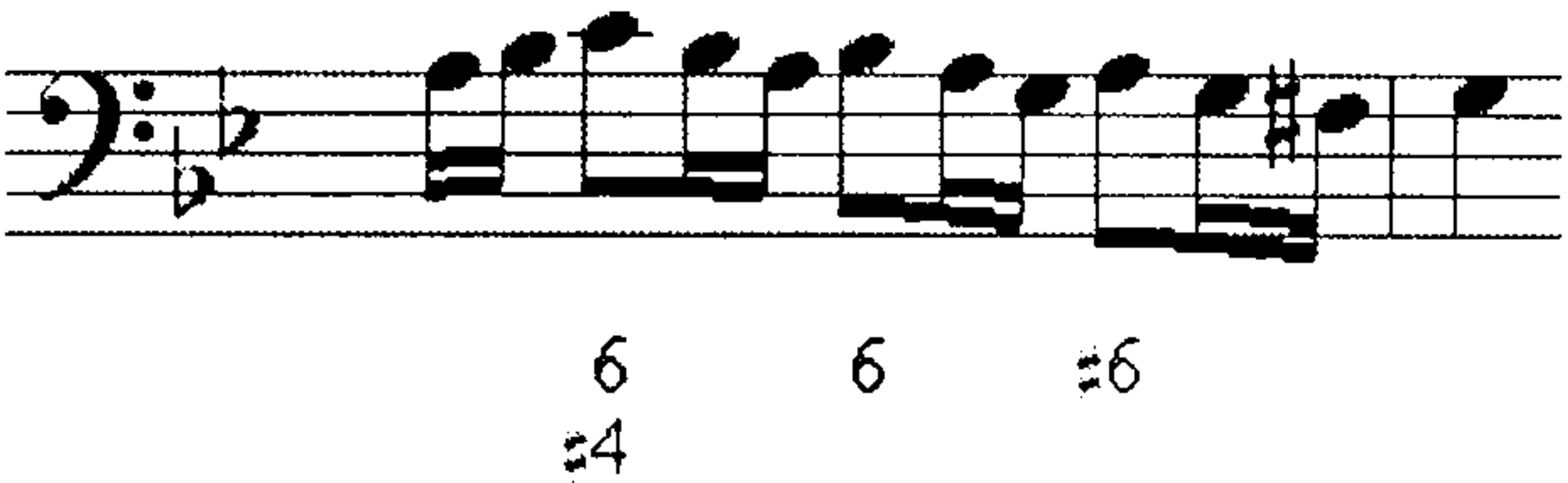


Blow gives this example to demonstrate the correct treatment of a succession of bass notes figured with a 6. The example also expands on his earlier observation: ‘you may play as many 3ds or Sixes, ascending or descending together, as you please, they being imperfect Cords’.⁴⁰ Of the two following examples, (1.a) and (1.d) follow this principle closely by presenting rising and falling scales freely accompanied by parallel 3s or 6s.

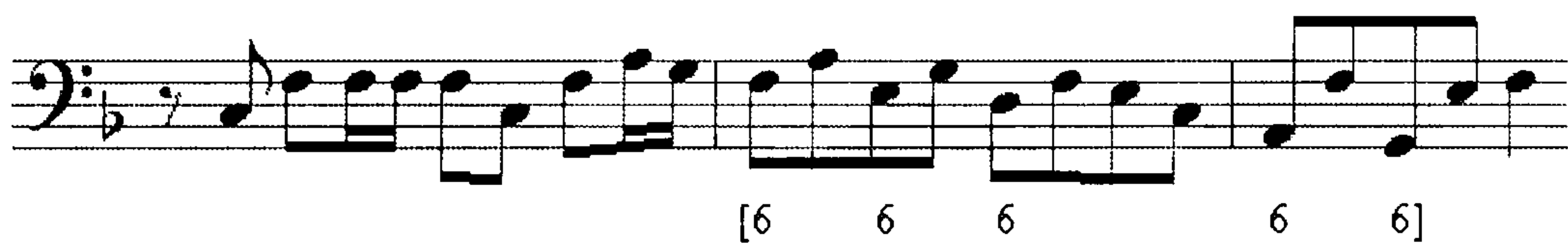
(1.a): 1683 Sonata 2/iii.



(1.b): 1697 Sonata 5/ii (second subject).



(1.c): 1697 Sonata 9/iii.



(1.d): 1697 Sonata 10/v.



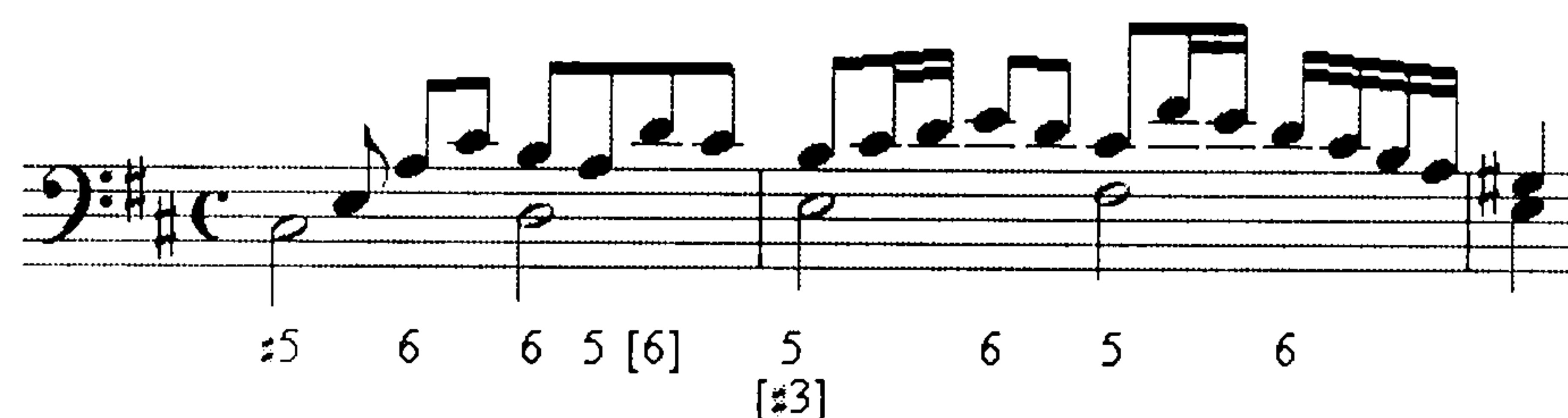
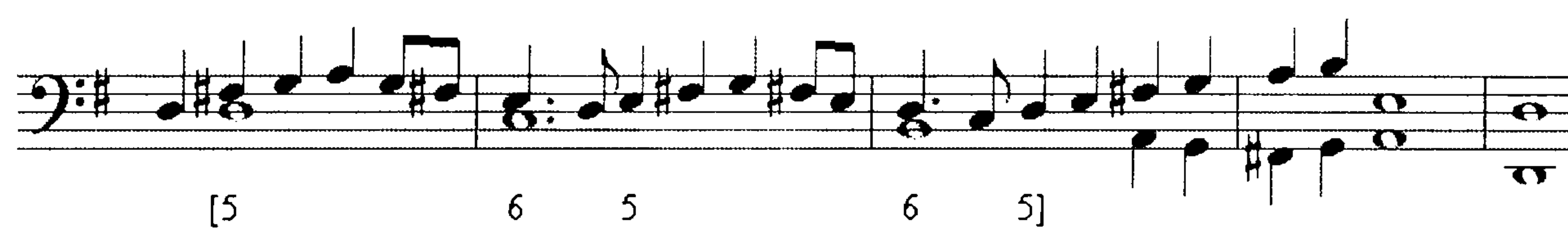
³⁹ Blow, ‘Rules’, p. 164.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

(Ex. 4.7 contd)

Precept 2: Locke, *Melothesia*, 'Examples in the 6th Rule'.⁴¹**(i): 'The 5th and 6th'.****(ii): 'The 6th and 5th'.**

This is the simplest elaboration of the basic parallel sixths given in Precept 1: a straightforward interpolation of a fifth above the bass in between each sixth. The same is advocated by Blow in his examples of 'Thoroughbass 5th & 6th ascending' and '6th & 5th descending', each given simply as a bass line with figures, and in realised form in his 'Example of 5th & 6th ascending gradually' [Ex. 11].⁴²

(2.a): 1683 Sonata 4/ii.**(2.b): 1683 Sonata 10/iv.^a****(2.c): 1683 Sonata 12/ii.****(2.d) : 1683 Sonata 8/iii.**

^a Heard for the first time as part of this progression in bars 113-14.

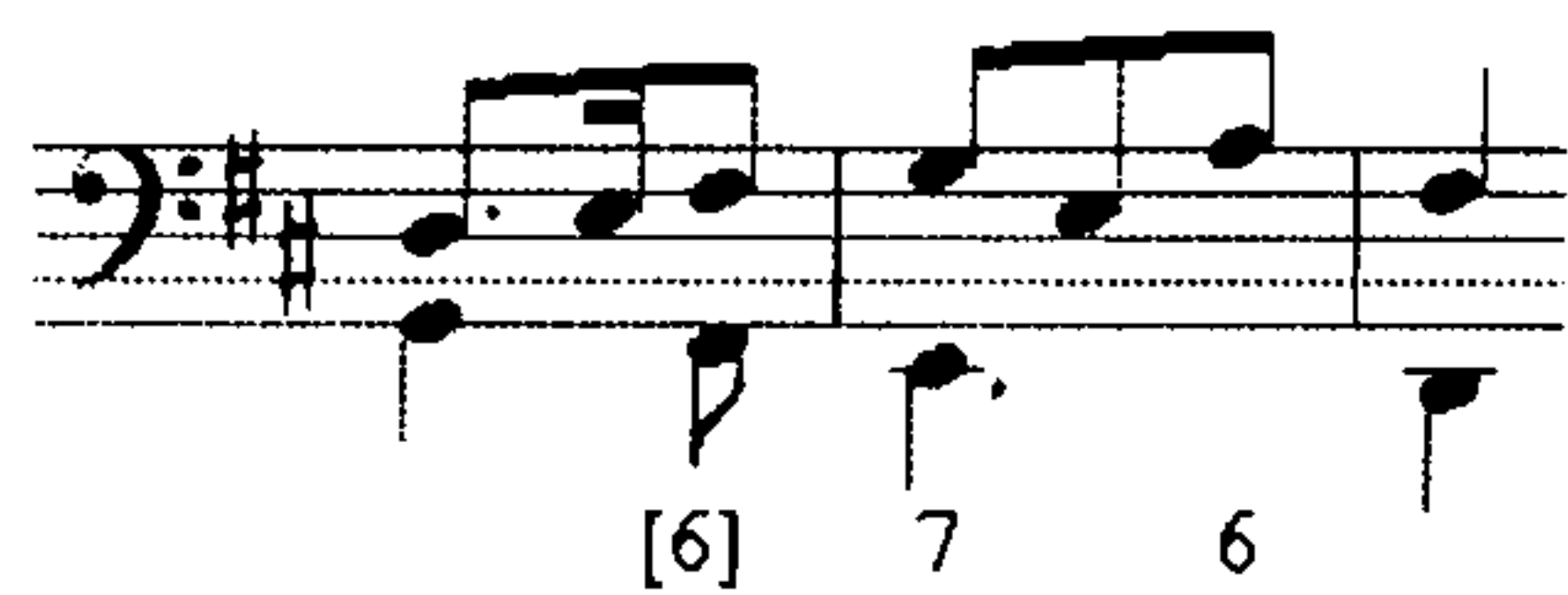
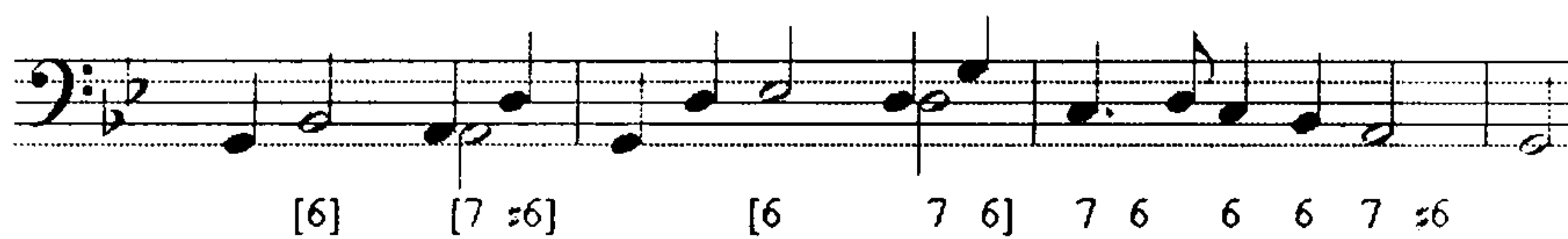
⁴¹ Locke, *Melothesia*, p. 10.

⁴² Blow, 'Rules', pp. 165, 168.

(Ex. 4.7 contd)

Precept 3: Locke, *Melothesia*, 'Examples in the 6th Rule: The 7th and 6th',⁴³

A further elaboration of the same basic model succession of parallel sixths. Blow gives a similar 'example of 7th & 6th, the bass descending'.⁴⁴ This time, of course, the progression is only possible given a descent in the bass, since the sevenths require a preparation that is not possible if the bass is rising.

(3.a): 1683 Sonata 2/v.**(3.b) : 1683 Sonata 3/ii.****(3.c) : 1683 Sonata 7/ii.^a****(3.d): 1683 Sonata 12/vi.****(3.e): 1697 Sonata 1/ii.****(3.f): 1697 Sonata 5/v.****(3.g): 1697 Sonata 7/iv.**

^a Subject initially introduced without the chromatic bass line given here; this is introduced at bar 54 and retained until the end; see esp. bars 68-72.

⁴³ Locke, *Melothesia*, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Blow, 'Rules', p. 165 (Ex. 9).

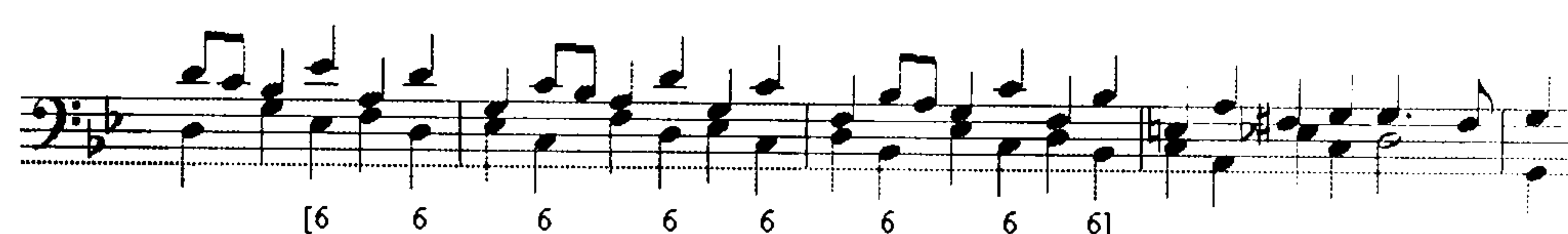
(Ex. 4.7 contd)

Precept 4: Locke, *Melothesia*, ‘Examples in the 7th Rule [i]’.⁴⁵

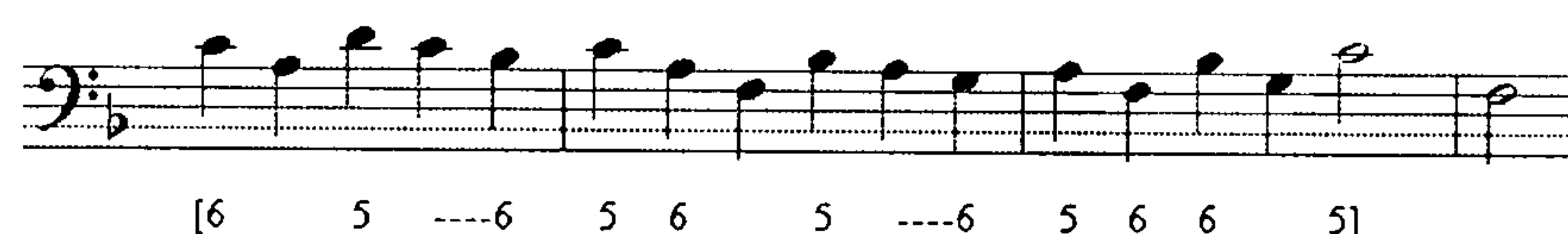


Locke's example of how to harmonise a bass line of falling unfolded thirds; a simple cycle of fifths with alternating 5/3 and 6/3 chords. This is just one more step away from the succession of sixths: the falling bass line remains intact, with a 5/3 inserted on the note one step higher between each pair of notes.

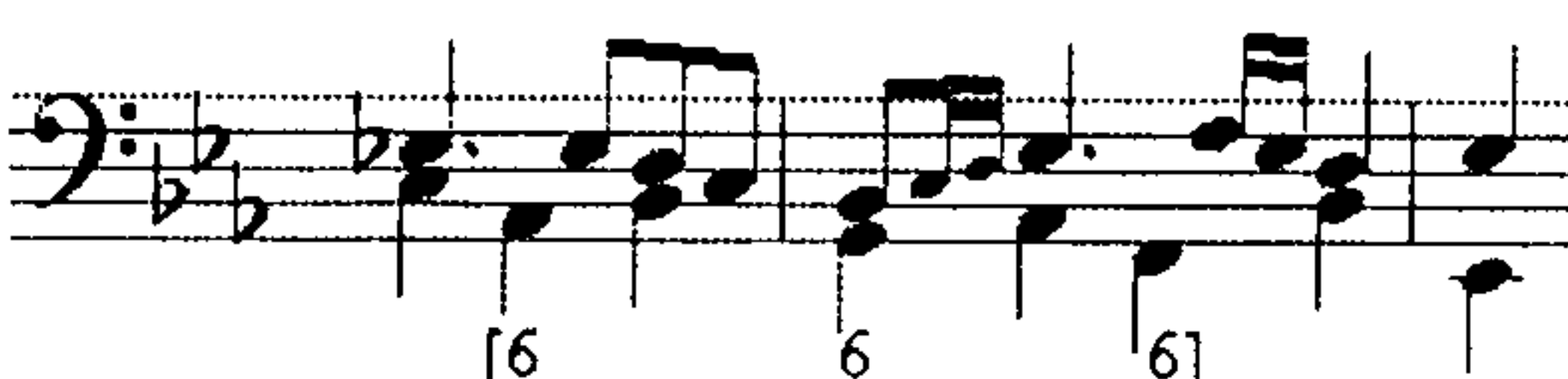
(4.a): 1683 Sonata 1/ii.^a



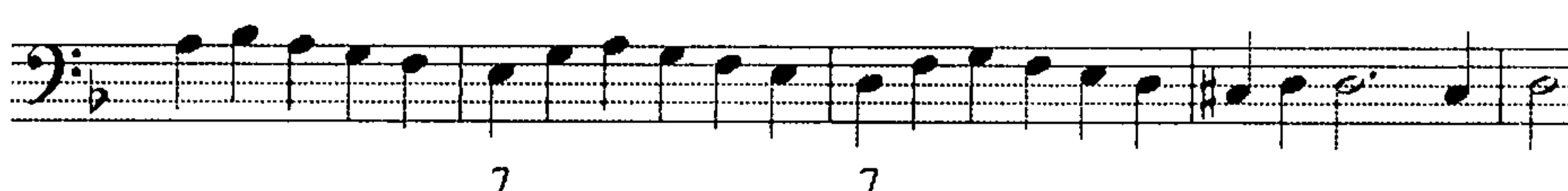
(4.b): 1683 Sonata 4/iv.



(4.c): 1697 Sonata 2/ii.^b



(4.d): 1683 Sonata 3/iv.



In its simplest form this progression appears to be different from the others here; it is, however, related to the basic pattern in Precept 4. This is shown by the following inversion of the three-part complex, in which the only change from the above progressions is the addition of a ninth to each 5/3 chord in the sequence:



^a The 6 on every second crotchet in the bass is not realised in Purcell's string parts; it is implied, however, in the rotated versions of the three-part counterpoint, for example in bars 33-6 and 43-5.

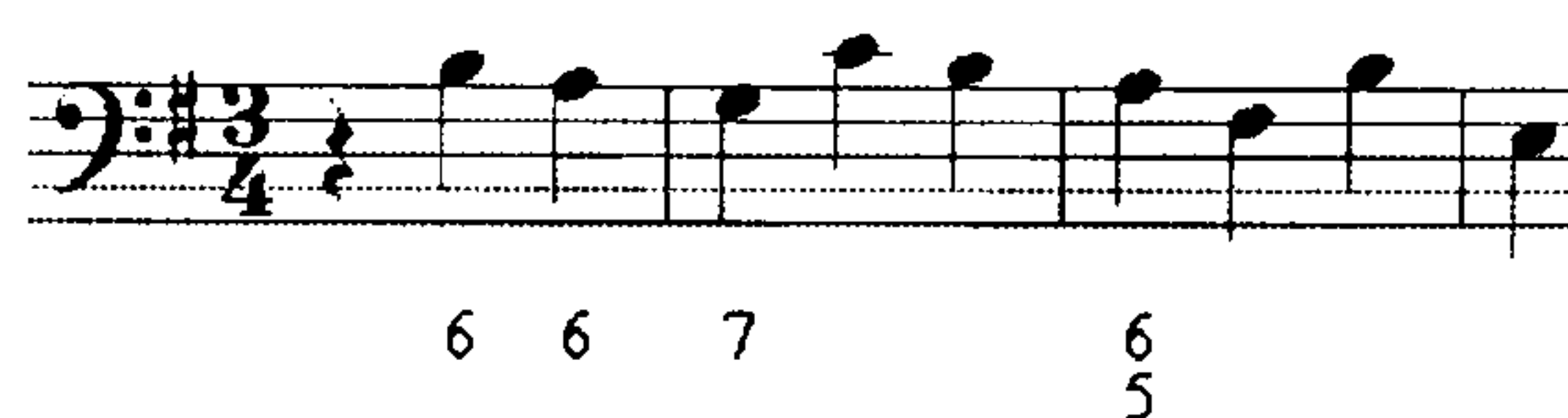
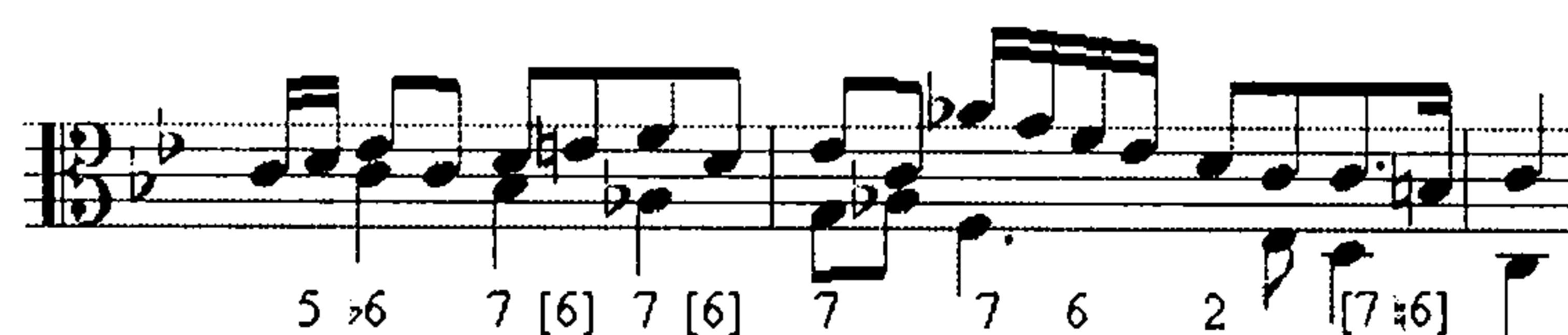
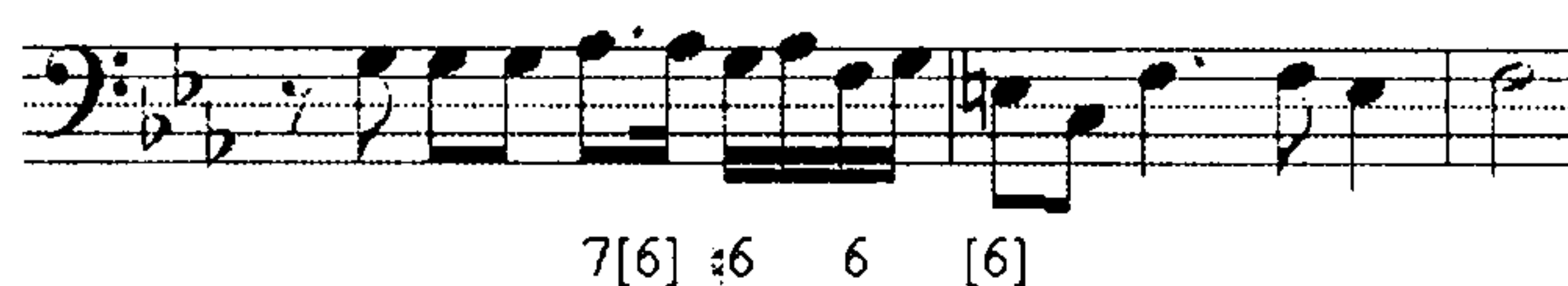
^b Note the parallel fifths; these are never realised in the movement. This interpretation of the subject is probably not the source of the material; rather it reflects Purcell's attempt to combine an imitatively conceived subject with a semiquaver episode outlining a thoroughbass progression. This process begins in bar 51, after both the subject and the episode have been introduced independently; see pp. 188-189 below.

⁴⁵ Locke, *Melothesia*, p. 10.

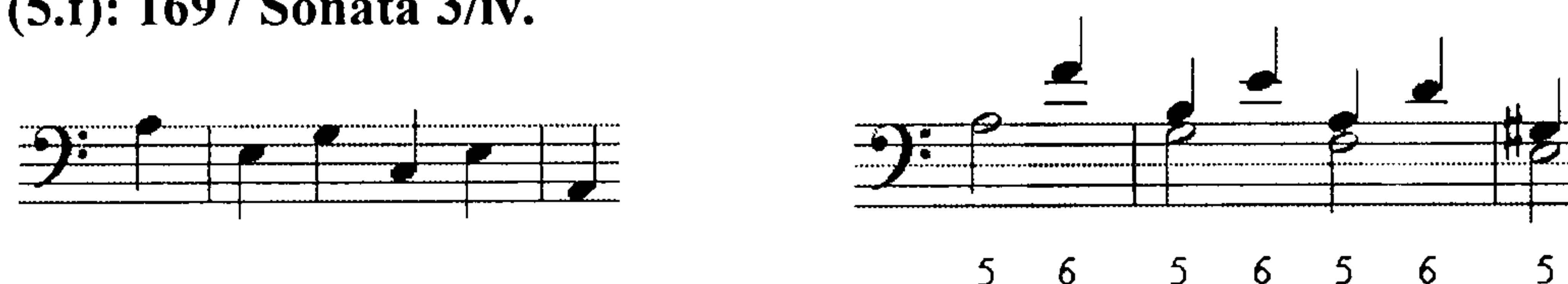
(Ex. 4.7 contd)

5. Fugue subjects based on combinations of these four precepts

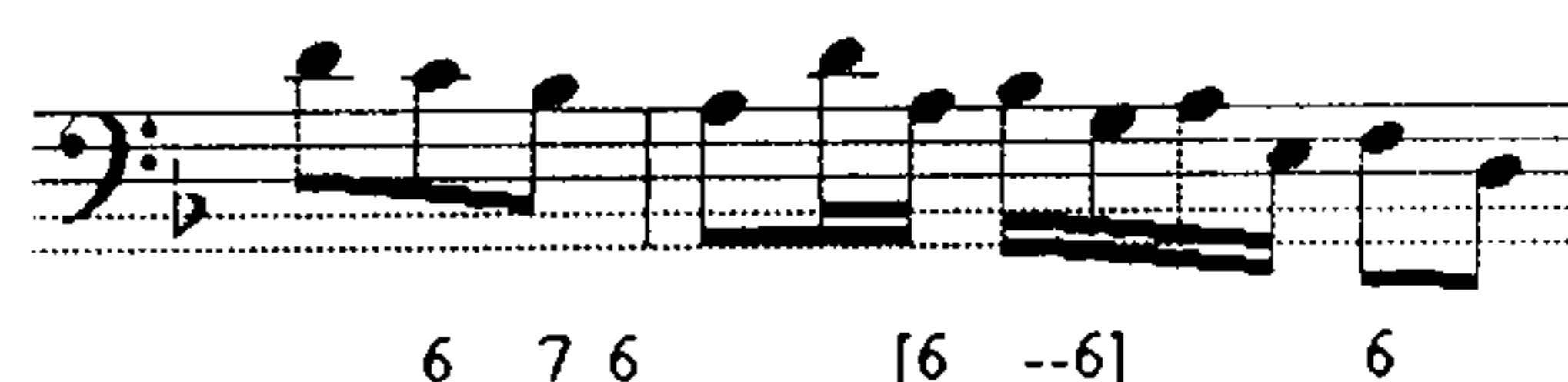
The following subjects all follow similar progressions based on successions of sixths over stepwise bass patterns; they are different in that they do not follow one form of this progression, but mix the different voice-leading patterns.

(5.a): 1683 Sonata 6/iv.**(5.b): 1683 Sonata 7/iv.****(5.c): 1683 Sonata 9/iii.****(5.d): 1683 Sonata 11/ii.****(5.e): 1697 Sonata 1/iv.**

Basic 7-6 progression (Precept 3) combined with the unfolded thirds from Precept 4.

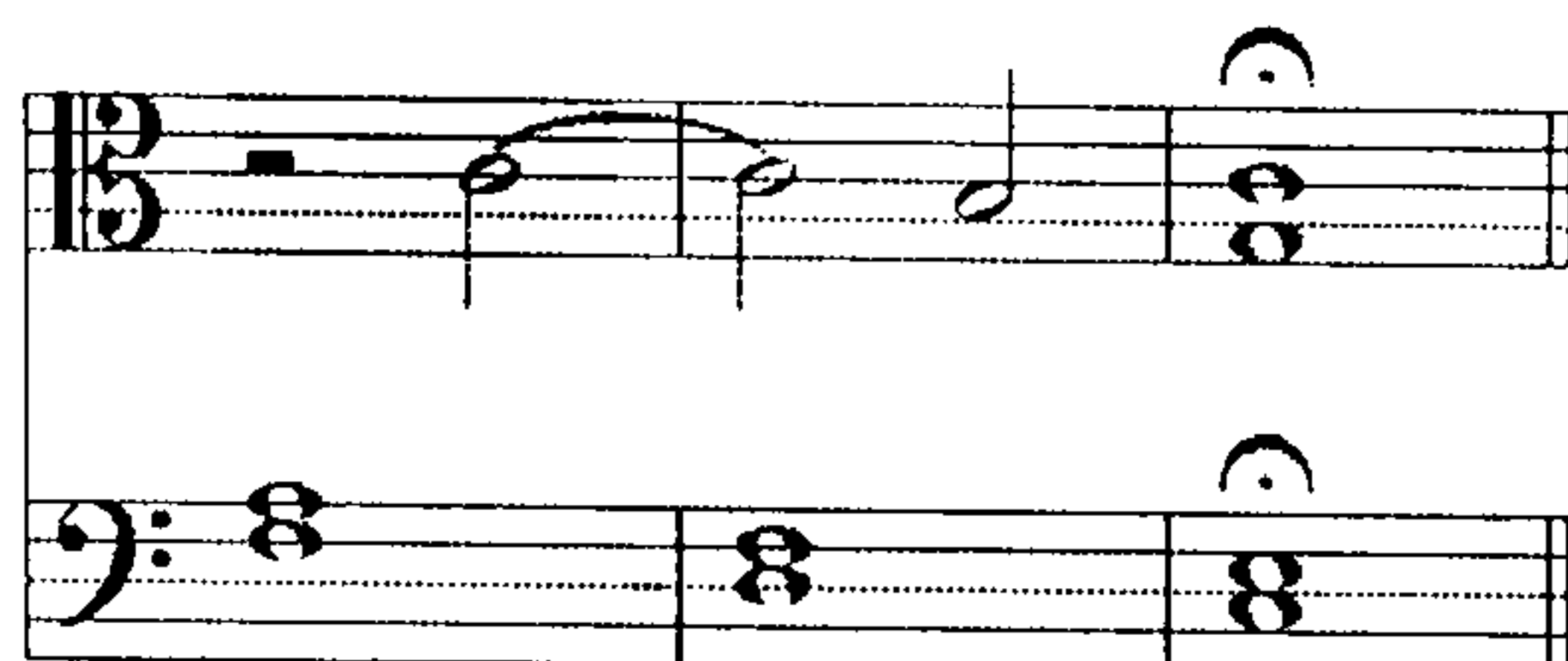
(5.f): 1697 Sonata 3/iv.

Although the initial subject here does not follow a progression, it is later adapted to fit with a semiquaver elaboration of a falling line. The underlying progression of this elaboration is clearly related to the progressions above: as a 5-6 pattern over a descending bass, it reverses the pattern of Precept 2; alternatively, it could be thought of as a 7-6 progression with the sevenths replaced with simple 5/3s. Either form of the subject could have been conceived first.

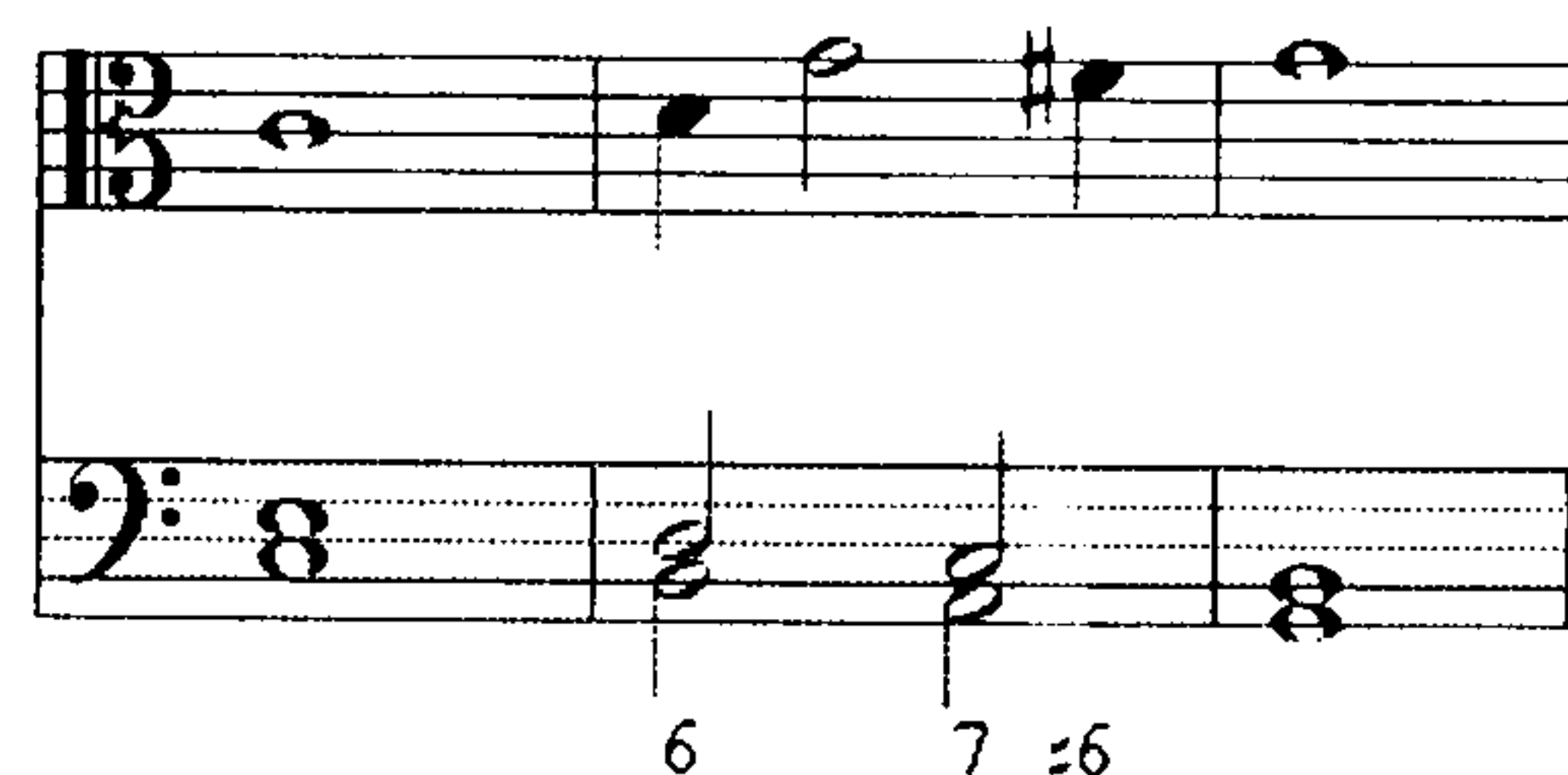
(5.g): 1697 Sonata 4/ii.**(5.h): 1697 Sonata 8/ii.****(5.i): 1697 Sonata 9/v.**

(Ex. 4.7 contd)

6. Subjects based on half-cadences

(i) Locke, *Melothesia*, 'Examples in the 4th Rule' [ii].⁴⁶

(ii) Combination with stepwise bass (transposed to the fifth).



Locke gives this example (i) in order to demonstrate the necessity of resolving a seventh with a major sixth when the bass continues down a tone, which he says is 'generally to be observed in all passing Closes'.⁴⁷ Locke's 'passing close' is the same as Blow's 'half cadence', which is distinct from the 'common cadence' in that it involves a stepwise descent to the key note rather than the more final approach by leap from the lower fourth or upper fifth.⁴⁸ It should not, however, be confused with the modern 'perfect' / 'imperfect' distinction. Both the 'common' and 'half' cadence can occur on the key note; no difference of harmonic context is implied. Rather, the cadence on the right (ii) is an example of a 'half cadence' on the fifth degree. It also makes use of the same stepwise descent in the bass that was the foundation of Precepts 1-4. Three fugue subjects in Purcell's sonatas appear to be derived from similar cadential patterns:

(6.a): 1683 Sonata 6/ii.



(6.b): 1697 Sonata 4/iv.



(6.c): 1697 Sonata 10/ii.



Together with the likelihood of his having studied Locke's and Blow's thoroughbass methods not long before he wrote most of the sonatas, the sheer number of works in which such set patterns play a central part strongly suggests that Purcell was consciously using them as a source of ideas in the early stages of his compositional process. The advantages of such a technique are even more obvious in the context of

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.⁴⁸ See Blow, 'Rules', p. 170.

Purcell's frequent use of invertible counterpoint in these works. The progression of 7-6s given in *Melothesia*, for example, is already triple-invertible, and all seven fugues that follow Precept 3, together with a further seven from the 'mixed' and 'cadential' subjects that make heavy use of 7-6 suspensions (5.a, 5.b, 5.c and 5.e, 6.a, 6.b and 6.c in Ex. 4.7), have triple-invertible expositions like those explored above. While the other progressions are not triple-invertible in themselves, it is simple to 'correct' them in order to create triple-invertible counterpoint (as in 2.d, 4.c, 4.d and 5.i), or, failing that, to make two invertible parts that could be used in a less strict application of the same principle (1.c, 2.a and 4.a).

In most cases in Ex. 4.7 the presence of the progression is so obvious as to be almost indisputable (as in the cases of the canzonas from 1683 Sonata 3 and 1697 Sonata 8 examined above). In a certain number of cases, however, there are ambiguities that are worth exploring both for the integrity of the principle as a whole, and for what they can tell us about Purcell's compositional technique: to what extent must a particular progression be actually realised in a composition before one can confidently assert its role in the composition of the piece?

In some movements, like 1683 Sonata 1, the question only arises because the detail of the progression is not fully realised in the three written parts. Here the unfolded thirds of the second subject seem clearly to imply the kind of progression given as precept 4, hence the figuring I have added in Ex. 4.7 (4.a). When this passage of counterpoint appears with the second subject in the bass, however, it is usually in just two parts, so that the sixths on alternate bass notes required by Locke's seventh rule are not realised in the string parts (nor indeed in the thoroughbass part, since this movement is extremely sparsely figured; Ex. 4.8, a and b). Even later in the movement, when we hear a section of three-part counterpoint with this subject in the bass, Purcell only provides the expected sixth in the given parts once, on the second crotchet of bar 51 (Ex. 4.8c). In the remainder of this passage, the overlapping entries of the first subject in the two violin parts simply produce a third and doubled octave from the bass. In such cases, the player of the thoroughbass part is left to supply the sixths according to Locke's seventh rule, as indeed does Tilmouth's suggested realisation in bars 36-9 and 43-5.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ PS(r) 5, pp. 2-4.

Ex. 4.8. 1683 Sonata 1/ii: implied thoroughbass progression.**(a) bb. 29-33.**
(b) bb. 36-40.
(c) bb. 50-54.

One passage in this movement does seem to confirm, however, that Purcell was working from the progression given as Precept 4, and paradoxically it is a passage where the unfolded thirds are not in the bass, but in the upper parts. In this passage (Ex. 4.9a), the second violin part makes a third with the bass on every other crotchet. By rotating the lower two parts (Ex. 4.9b), we can see that the passage is a simple inversion of the basic progression of alternating fifths and sixths over a pattern of unfolded thirds.

In terms of performance practice, such confirmation of the basic premise behind this material lends support to Tilmouth's thoroughbass realisation in the passages in which he chooses to follow Locke's seventh rule and supply the sixths missing from the string parts. It even raises the question of whether they should be applied more widely, in places where Tilmouth does not follow this rule (bb. 50-54 in particular),

Ex. 4.9. 1683 Sonata 1/ii: inversion of progression.**(a) Passage with unfolded thirds in violin parts.****(b) The same passage with the lower two parts rotated.**

though the need for variety and clarity of texture must also be taken into account. In terms of the analytical approach that underpins Ex. 4.7, meanwhile, this passage shows that a progression can be identified as the foundation of a movement even if it never appears in its original form in that movement. Its role in the derivation of material is not undermined by its absence from the final product, especially in cases like this in which the final form of the material simply omits, rather than contradicts, elements of the precept. We might speculate on why Purcell left out the sixths necessary to confirm the presence of precept 4 in this movement. In some cases, like that of Ex. 4.8c above, the omission will have resulted from the particular imitative combinations of material involved. In others it might simply be a case of neglecting to provide figures in the thoroughbass part: perhaps Purcell considered the progression so obvious that it would be instantly recognised by its performers, or alternatively, he might deliberately have left scope for variety in its realisation.

Whereas 1683 Sonata 1/i differs from its contrapuntal precept only through omission, there are cases in Ex. 4.7 of direct conflict between the melodic content of subject material and its putative harmony, suggesting that the progression came later in the compositional process than the melodic content of one or more of the subjects. One such example is the last movement of the famous ‘Golden’ sonata, 1697 Sonata 9. The passage given in Ex. 4.7 (5.i) is actually part of the three-part complex that is first heard in bars 132-4, and is restated at the fifth, with the semiquaver countersubject in the bass (b. 135³; Ex. 4.10a). It appears to be based on a progression

Ex. 4.10. 1697 Sonata 9/v: disjunction between material and progression.

a) Three-part complex at fifth, as written.



b) Possible progression.



over a descending scale in the bass, as in Ex. 4.10b: a combination of simple parallel 6/3s with the succession of 6-5s advocated in Locke's sixth rule. The two passages, however, do not map onto one another comfortably. The top line of Ex. 4.10a, which is actually the principal subject of the movement, contradicts the progression in Ex. 4.10b by supplying a fourth above the bass on the last quavers of bars 136 and 137, with the result that the bass notes must be heard as passing between the two adjacent notes. In other words, the true bass pattern in bars 136-9 is not a falling scale, but a succession of falling thirds on the first beat of each bar. It seems inconceivable, therefore, that the progression in Ex. 4.10b could have been the starting point from which the materials were derived in this instance. Rather, the melodic subject must have come first, and the progression, if it formed part of the composition of this movement at all, came into play afterwards, in the composition of the three-part complex that formed the basis of the opening platform of this fugue.

The object of such analysis should not be to make the notes 'fit' a progression at all costs; indeed, there may be considerable insight to be gained from asking questions about why such progressions are *not* present in a movement, or how melodic and harmonic materials interact with or contradict one another. In Ex. 4.7 (4.c) the subject and progression in 1697 Sonata 2/ii are incompatible: they create parallel fifths between the second and third notes of the first complete bar quoted. This is because the fugal materials themselves were conceived independently of the progression. Instead, they are the product of *fugeing* very like that examined in Chapter 3; indeed, the subject and first countersubject of this fugue are based on the very same material that Purcell explored in Fantasias 6 and 11, and In nomine 2 (see pp. 134-148 above). The subject derives from an unviable interlock, T:A⁺⁵, that was not attempted in the earlier works, and its countersubject is clearly related to the complete subject *arsin* from Fantasia 6, complete with continuation (Ex. 4.11).

Ex. 4.11. 1697 Sonata 2/ii (opening): derivation of materials.

The treatment of this material is very different from that in the earlier consort music, however. Having derived his materials in this way, Purcell used them to create a permutational first platform just as he did in 1683 Sonata 3/ii. In the course of the movement he then proceeded to research different ways of accommodating the progression, first heard in bar 51, to the subject; in other words, the main compositional interest of the movement is the reconciliation of a subject not conceived in accordance with a thoroughbass progression with the kinds of techniques found in other sonata fugues. A similar conceit in 1697 Sonata 3/iv (5.f in Ex. 4.7) has slightly different results: here it is the intervallic content (though not the contour) of the subject that is altered in order to fit a progression introduced later in the movement.

Finally, there are some movements in which the underlying similarity between each of the progressions in Precepts 1 to 4 of Ex. 4.7 is itself examined as part of the compositional process. In 1683 Sonata 8/iii, Purcell modifies the original progression of 6-5s over a descending bass line to make a succession of 7-6s (Ex. 4.12). The modification further results in a new cadence on the key note rather than the fifth, coinciding with the return to key note harmony for the end of the movement; thus the intensification of the progression through dissonance plays a structural role as well as a purely cosmetic one.

In the canzona of 1683 Sonata 9, meanwhile, Purcell exploits the relationship between the different thoroughbass precepts as the solution to a conflict between the melodic properties of his subject and the voice-leading of the underlying progression. This fugue begins with a triple-invertible exposition based on the same 7-6 pattern

Ex. 4.12. 1683 Sonata 8/iii: intensification of progression.**(a) Three-part complex showing 6-5 progression.**

74

[6] [5] [6] [5]

(b) Later appearance of subject, incorporating 7-6 progression.

114

[6] [7] [6] [7] [6]

used in 1683 Sonata 3/ii. In this case, however, the principal subject is not an elaboration of the descending bass line but a separate, cadential theme. The implied cadence half-way through this subject brings it into direct conflict with the harmonic implications of the progression: on the second quaver of its second bar (boxed in Ex. 4.13a) the first violin makes a fourth with the bass. In order to correct this problem, Purcell altered his bass line such that it rose to an $A\flat$ on the second quaver of the bar, providing the C with consonant support as the third of the chord. He then applied a similar alteration to each of the notes in the descending scale in the bass. Ex. 4.13b shows the complex as it appears in the canzona itself: the falling scale in the bass has become a passage of unfolded thirds filled in by passing semiquavers. Instead of revising the progression according to Locke's seventh rule, however, Purcell retained the sevenths from the original 7-6 progression, producing a mixture of precepts 3 and 4 from Ex. 4.7.

This new complex demonstrates considerable subtlety on the part of Purcell, since the modification had to retain the melodic characteristics of the original 7-6s over a descending bass. The issue is the invertibility of the complex: when the third subject (vln II in Ex. 4.13b) forms the bass part, the elaborated descending scale of the second subject must be capable of accepting a different harmonic context. Whereas in Ex. 4.13b, each off-beat quaver in the second subject (bass) was interpreted

Ex. 4.13. 1683 Sonata 9/iii: 'correction' of progression.**(a) Problem with relationship between subject and progression.**

5 6 7 6 7 6 7 6 7 6 7 6

(b) 'Corrected' complex as it appears in canzona.

b6 7 7 7 7 6 2

(c) Different arrangement of these parts.

2 b2 2 2 6/5 6/5

as a harmony note and given a root-position chord, in Ex. 4.13c the same notes, now in the first violin part, must be understood as upper auxiliaries, and thus as correctly handled dissonances. Without this recognition, the complex is not triple-invertible, since the resultant harmony would be a series of unresolved, parallel 6/4s over the bass. The success of Purcell's opening platform thus hinges on the fact that the second subject is capable of fulfilling the melodic characteristics required by both the original 7-6 progression (Ex. 4.13a) and its modified version (Ex. 4.13b).

Purcell further demonstrates this property of the second subject by making use of both forms of the progression in the remainder of the movement. In Ex. 4.14a, the simplified bass takes the form of a series of unfolded thirds, figured with a simple sixth on alternate notes according to Locke's seventh rule; the same progression as in Ex. 4.14b, but without the sevenths that resulted from the presence of the third subject. By contrast, the thoroughbass part in Ex. 4.14b ignores the upper note of the

Ex. 4.14. 1683 Sonata 9/iii, later treatment of thoroughbass progression.**(a) Alternating 6s and 5s over unfolded thirds in the bass.**

98

[thoroughbass]

6 b6 6 6

(b) Succession of 7-6s over a descending scale in the bass.

104

5 6 7 6 7 6 7 6 b6 7 6 7 6 7 6

bass part, producing an alternative simplification: a simple descending scale in crotchets, figured with a series of 7-6s.

The point of such an analysis is not, therefore, simply to identify the progression involved in a work, or indeed to choose between two alternative interpretations and thus situate each example within in a kind of taxonomy of the thoroughbass precepts from which Purcell drew his compositional materials. Rather, by asking these kinds of questions about the origins of the material it is possible to arrive at more fundamental observations about the way Purcell approached the composition of this kind of movement. Given the differences between Purcell's treatment of the material in Ex. 4.14, (a) and (b), the canzona of 1683 Sonata 9 also turns out to be a useful demonstration of the importance of his treatment of the thoroughbass to the actual composition of the music. Clearly this undermines the view that the thoroughbass part was simply an afterthought, and therefore had no bearing on the actual composition of the works: although the part itself may affect only the performance resources, Purcell's approach to its provision illuminates the extent of his internalisation of Locke's and Blow's thoroughbass techniques, and their importance throughout his composition of the sonatas.

PURCELL'S FUGUES AND THE ITALIAN STYLE

It is no coincidence that the thoroughbass progressions that Locke describes in *Melothesia* are the very same progressions that had become increasingly common in the Italian sonata in the course of the seventeenth century. Locke may well have encountered such works through his position in the Catholic chapel of Catherine of Braganza, and the fact that he included them in his manual suggests that it was designed with the newly popular genre in mind, in order to equip his readers to accompany music in the latest styles. Peter Allsop notes that such 'stereotyping of harmonic formulas constructed over stock bass patterns' was a particular feature of the Bolognese style of chamber music, with which of course Lorenzo Penna was associated.⁵⁰ It is particularly obvious in the music of Vitali, in whose works such formulas began to appear not only in slow movements, as they had in the music of Merula and Cazzati, but in all kinds of movements, including fugues. Roman sonata composers made less use of such progressions, meanwhile, until the appearance of Corelli's opus 1 (1681), in which the Bolognese technique was refined and elevated to a central position in the composer's harmonic practice. Ever since, it has been considered one of the defining characteristics of his style, paradoxically garnering both praise for its simplicity and grace, and censure for its apparent lack of invention and originality.⁵¹

Purcell, of course, is unlikely to have heard or played Corelli's sonatas before he composed his own. As noted in Chapter 1, his knowledge of the Italian sonata literature is likely to have included many of the most important proponents of this harmonic approach before Corelli; probably the very same works from which Locke would have derived his knowledge of the style. His familiarity with the music of Legrenzi, Cazzati and Vitali, and even Lonati and Colista, must have alerted him to the possibility of using such progressions in order successfully to imitate the Italian style, as he professed was his intention in the preface to the 1683 Sonatas.

Given this intention, however, his approach to the use of these progressions was remarkably idiosyncratic. Like his enthusiastic adoption of the strict permutational approach to the opening platform of a fugue he found in works like the 'Calista'

⁵⁰ Allsop, *Italian Trio Sonata*, p. 41.

⁵¹ See the summary of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century critical appraisals of Corelli's work in Libby, 'Interrelationships in Corelli', pp. 263-265.

example, it resulted in a highly personal version of the Italian sonata that, while inspired by Italian methods, is as deeply reliant on Purcell's attitudes towards the art of composition as were the fantasias explored in Chapter 3. Armed with the observations made about his approach to sonata fugues thus far, it is now possible to address the question of their relationship with Italian examples without resorting to the kinds of banal generalisations about 'English vein', 'naturalness of harmony' and the like that have hitherto characterised such discussions. In particular, the common contrast between Corelli and Purcell made by Roger North and John Hawkins is considerably strengthened by my observations about Purcell's compositional techniques.

A simple demonstration of the differences between the compositional approaches of Corelli and Purcell can be achieved by comparing Purcell's D minor canzona (1683 Sonata 3/ii), whose opening platform was the primary example of his permutational approach to the fugal exposition in the discussion above, with the fugal movement from Corelli's fourth sonata (op. 1). It has already been noted that Purcell's systematic approach to the opening of a fugue was comparatively rare in Italian sonatas. In fact, only a handful of examples by Colista and Lonati exhibit anything approaching the strictness of technique that Purcell applied so widely in his own examples; Corelli, furthermore, never used this approach. Purcell's and Corelli's fugues do, however, share many of the broader features that I suggested above characterised Purcell's canzonas and related fugues as distinct from the fantasias. The opening of Corelli's fugue clearly demonstrates this: each voice enters successively with the subject, which itself forms a clearly-defined phrase unit, ending with a cadence (Ex. 4.15). Indeed, this fugue adopts a stricter attitude towards its materials than do many of Corelli's. The subject continues to appear throughout the movement, and there is something approaching a regular countersubject (based on the suspension in vln I, b. 3), which recurs at each statement. Even though the artificial and systematic elements of Purcell's D minor canzona are absent here, therefore, there are good grounds for comparison between the two movements.

It is in the character of the fugal materials that Purcell's idiosyncratic take on this style is most easily observed. As Ex. 4.7 shows, Purcell based a large majority of his subjects or subject-complexes on standardised thoroughbass progressions. In the

the beginning of the passage. Although decorated with rhythmic figures from the subject, the progressions are clearly differentiated from the subject itself by the repetitive application of these figures and by their harmonic neutrality: at any one moment the 'key' is undefined, since each chord derives its meaning from the surrounding chords in the progression. Only when Corelli inserts a cadence does a local key area once again become clear, and in each of the passages quoted in Ex. 4.16 Corelli introduces a subject entry at this point in order to reinforce the new harmony.

This kind of episodic use of progressions is entirely absent from Purcell's 1683 Sonata 3/ii. After his opening platform, Purcell resorted to more melodically conceived, and indeed artificial techniques. The subject is combined with itself in two passages of three-voice stretto entries in bars 41-2 and 50-52, in between which is an episode constructed entirely from a short motif outlining a rising fifth and its inversion, loosely related to the second countersubject of the initial triple-invertible complex (see Ex. 4.2 above). The important point about this episode is not its relationship with the fugal materials, however, but the imitative technique that governs its harmonic behaviour (see Ex. 4.17): the falling fifth of the inverted motif in the bass initiates a movement around a cycle of fifths, which is then reversed by two successive rising statements to return to C in bar 46. Purcell then begins the episode again as he did in bar 43, this time turning to G minor at the end of bar 46 by simply sharpening the F in the bass. Like Corelli's episodes, this one ends with a subject entry, but unlike Corelli's, here the subject is actually used in order to modulate,

Ex. 4.17. 1683 Sonata 3/ii, episode.

rather than to reinforce a key already reached by a progression. While Corelli's fugue relies on the insertion of progression-based episodes for contrast, then, and uses subject statements in order to control these and to re-stabilise the harmony, Purcell's use of progressions is confined to the opening platform, after which the remainder of the fugue is devoted to the melodic and imitative examination of his fugal materials using his technique of *fugeing*.

Notwithstanding the general objections raised in Chapter 2, Christopher Wintle's approach to Corelli, and in particular his analysis of op. 3 Sonata 1/ii, offers a more systematic approach to the relationship between fugal materials and progressions.⁵² This fugue is a considerably more substantial movement than the A minor one quoted above. In the eight years between the publication of Corelli's opp. 1 and 3, his music became considerably more expansive. Commenting on the first movement of the same sonata, Libby noted that although Corelli's music always 'sticks close to sequences as the main means of extension and movement between one harmonic goal and the next', by op. 3 'he is beginning to get away from relying so much on the simplest and most straightforward sequential and cadential progressions, learning to reach the final goal of a passage less directly, putting it off by decorations of the basic motion'.⁵³ Nevertheless, the same techniques are important here as were observed in the A minor fugue: episodes are built on progressions (as in bb. 17-18) and the subject returns to provide harmonic stability (bb. 24, 35). There is greater integration between the two types of material than before, since progressions interrupt subject entries in order to delay cadences (13, 26), but the essential contrast between the stability of the subject and the transitory harmonies of the progressions remains in tact.

Wintle's analysis of this movement begins from the premise that its subject is derived from a particular 'tonal model'. This is demonstrated not through a hierarchical reduction as in orthodox Schenkerian studies, but on a series of staves designed to show successive stages of elaboration from the basic model (Ex. 4.18). As the labelling across the top of the example shows, the tonal model in question here is in fact an orthodox Schenkerian interrupted '5-line', compressed at stage (b) to avoid the return to tonic harmony at the resumption of scale degree 5 in the treble. The subject of the fugue (c) is derived from the bass arpeggiation, and towards the end

⁵² Wintle, 'Corelli's Tonal Models', pp. 55-59.

⁵³ Libby, 'Interrelationships in Corelli', p. 270.

Ex. 4.18. Corelli, op. 3 Sonata 1/ii: derivation of fugal materials from tonal model.⁵⁴

The example illustrates the derivation of fugal materials from a tonal model. Part (a) shows the tonal model in G major, with a descending line of fifths (5-4-3-2-1) and an ascending line of fourths (1-2-3-4-5). Part (b) shows the fugal subject in G major, derived from the model. Part (c) shows a reference to the first six measures of the sonata, and part (d) shows a reference to measures 36-37 of the sonata.

leaps up to outline the implied 7-6 suspension in the inner voice. Wintle accounts for appearances of the subject in other voices in terms of changes in registration.⁵⁵ Since both this movement and the fourth movement of the same sonata have fugal expositions in which the subject is presented throughout in the tonic, he avoids the often difficult question in Schenker-influenced approaches to fugue of how the transposition of the subject to the dominant affects its relationship to the underlying voice-leading. Since, however, his tonal models exist at the middleground, rather than deep background level, and are themselves tonally complete, we may assume that the transposition of the subject implies a transposition of the corresponding tonal model.

Wintle understands the motivic aspects of Corelli's music as essentially ornamental, as he acknowledges at the beginning of his treatment of the fourth movement:

Seen from a thematic perspective, the fugal movements of Italian Baroque music are often considered to be less to the point, less consistently sustained, than their counterparts in German Baroque music. Although there is truth in the observation,

⁵⁴ Wintle, 'Corelli's Tonal Models', p. 57.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

censure of the Italian works rests on the assumption that that these movements are primarily ‘about’ themes and their motives. This, however, is not an assumption that may necessarily be upheld in the face of Corelli’s music. On the contrary, the thematicism here is essentially decorative. The fugal themes are designed to examine selected aspects of the fundamental models that make up his musical rhetoric. To describe the themes is necessarily to invoke the models, and, indeed, a fugal theme may be related to (or ‘discovered in’) more than one of these.⁵⁶

Although he does not demonstrate this in relation to the second movement, it is relatively easy to find instances of the tonal models being ‘examined’ in different ways in the course of the movement. In bars 6 to 10, for example, the cadence in the dominant is reached by transposing the entire model up a fifth. Ex. 4.19 (my own analysis, using Wintle’s approach to notation) starts from the exact same tonal model (a), and proceeds to show (b) how the initial 5-2 descent is transferred to the bass and used as a modulatory progression from the tonic. The remainder of the model is unaltered, except for the decoration of the bass V which adds consonant support to the treble E and inner voice C in bar 9. Despite this reliance on the same tonal model, however, the musical foreground (c) shows very little melodic resemblance to the subject of the fugue: in Wintle’s terms, the movement is ‘about’ the underlying model. The subject is simply an ornamentation of this model, and may or may not appear in conjunction with its every occurrence.

Ex. 4.19. Corelli, op. 3 Sonata 1/ii, bb. 6-10: appearance of tonal model.

The example consists of three staves of musical notation, labeled a, b, and c. Above the staves are numerical models representing the tonal structure. Staff (a) shows a treble and bass staff with a 5-2 descent in the treble. Staff (b) shows the same model transposed to the bass. Staff (c) shows the model decorated with a bass V. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

According to this approach to Corelli's music, it should be no surprise that the subject entries, when they are heard, maintain an essentially constant relationship with the underlying tonal model (see, for example, bb. 23-4, 24-5 and 34-5). The subject is designed to ornament or 'examine' the model by drawing attention to its characteristic voice-leading; any change in the relationship between the two would undermine this function, obscuring the statement of the model. This observation also accounts for what at first seems to be an exception to the rule, what Wintle calls the 'radical alteration and limitation upon extent undergone by the modally adjusted form of the subject at mm. 10-12'.⁵⁷ The alteration serves to maintain the relationship of subject to model by acting as a bridge between the key-note and relative minor harmonies (the progression in bb. 13 and 14 simply delays the expected cadence, by prolonging the local fifth in the bass reached in b. 13³). This is shown in Ex. 4.20, again adopting Wintle's notation: what is apparently a strange corruption of a tonal answer can be explained by the modulation, since the alteration of the subject's fourth note to a B \flat makes it an upper neighbour to A, the new scale degree 5.

Ex. 4.20. Corelli, op. 3 Sonata 1/ii: bb. 12-15.

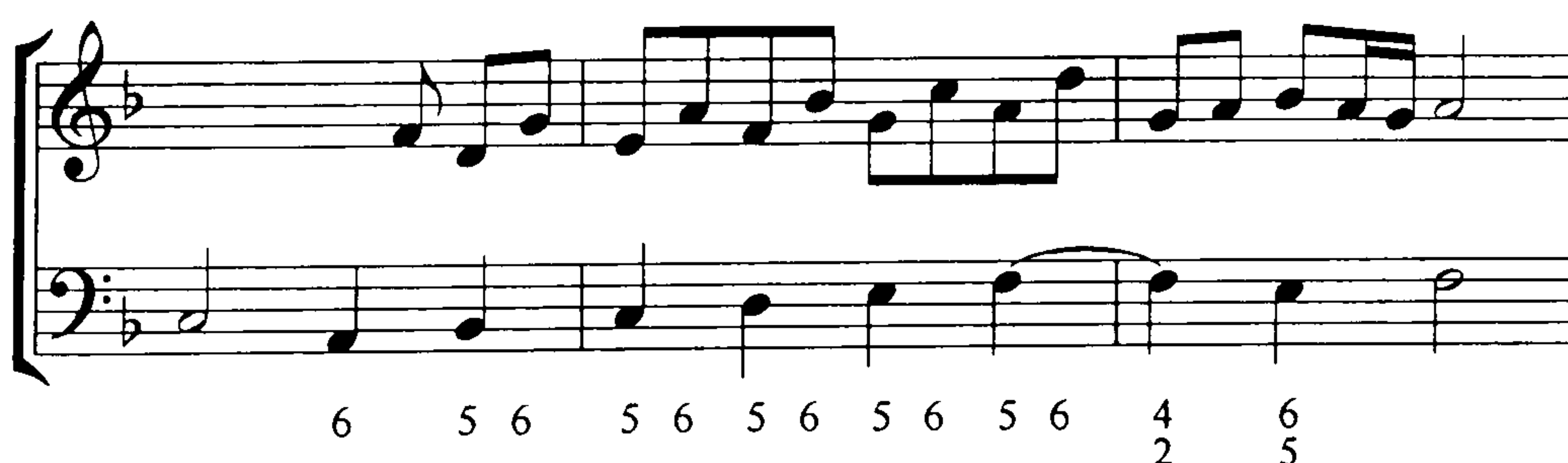
The image displays a musical score for Corelli's op. 3 Sonata 1/ii, measures 12-15. The score is divided into four parts: (a) measures 12-13, (b) measures 14-15, (c) a detailed view of the harmonic structure, and (d) the original manuscript notation for measures 12-15. Part (a) shows the subject entry with a melodic line in the treble and a bass line. Above the staff, a sequence of scale degrees is indicated: $\hat{5}$ (4-3-2) || $\hat{5}$ — 4 — 3 — 2 — 1. Part (b) shows the subject entry transposed up a third to link with the tonic harmony. Part (c) shows the prolongation of V, with a sequence of scale degrees: 7 - 6, 7 - 6, 7 - 6, 7 - 6. Part (d) shows the original manuscript notation for measures 12-15. Annotations include: 'Transposed up a third to link with tonic harmony' and 'Prolongation of V (cf. Wintle's Ex. 19, p. 58)'. The score is in G minor, with a key signature of two flats.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

Three important characteristics emerge from this approach to Corelli's 'tonal models'. Firstly, the essential point of Corelli's compositional technique is to examine the qualities of the particular model on which the movement is based; this offers a strong explanation for the musical coherence of whole movements despite the fact that they appear to be less well argued in thematic and motivic terms. Secondly, the subject of a Corelli fugue exists as an ornamentation of the underlying model, designed in order to accentuate its most important features and to draw attention to its recurrence. Finally, and as a consequence of these two characteristics, the relationship between subject and model remains to all intents and purposes the same in the course of a movement. It is a melodic expression of the underlying stability of the tonal model, and thus its function is diametrically opposed to the progression-based episodes, which are unstable and introduce harmonic contrast.

By contrast, Purcell's sonata fugues tend to blur the distinction between subject (stable harmony based on tonal model) and progression (harmonic contrast and digression) found in Italian works. A simple comparison with Corelli's F major fugue can be heard in 1683 Sonata 4/ii. As shown in Ex. 4.7, this double fugue is based on a simple 5-6 progression realised in its two subjects and followed by a cadence (Ex. 4.21). Although superficially similar, such a progression is very different from the kind of 'tonal model' Wintle identifies in Corelli's music: the much faster harmonic rhythm of Purcell's progression makes it a foreground, not a deep middleground phenomenon, and the relationship between the melodic elements and the harmonic function of the phrase is too ill defined. Whereas each successive element of Corelli's 'model' could be related to its specific function in outlining the descent to the key note, in Purcell's subject material the progression could continue indefinitely: it is only the interruption of a cadential suspension that creates the illusion of a goal-directed model. As such, the difference in the technique of the two composers is akin to the difference between the key-specific *règles de l'octave* that

Ex. 4.21. 1683 Sonata 4/ii: subjects and progression.



Joel Lester examines in relation to the realisation of an unfigured bass, and the rules that Locke proposed for the same purpose which rely on the melodic behaviour of the bass irrespective of harmonic context.

The proposal of an alternative tonal model for Purcell's fugue only underlines the problem of understanding Purcell's compositional technique in this way. The suggested model in Ex. 4.22a seems accurately to represent the harmonic trajectory of the subject at the opening, and at certain later points in the movement when, like in the Corelli fugue, the subject returns in exactly the same harmonic context (twice in bb. 44⁴ to 49, for example). The idea that such a model could have formed part of Purcell's 'workbench methods' seems unlikely, though: the descent from the fifth scale degree to the key note directly contradicts the prevailing melodic *ascents* throughout the movement, and the bass line of the model is contrapuntally incompatible with the second subject (due to parallel fifths) except in very limited circumstances. Purcell's subjects are clearly derived from the 5-6 progression, undermining any sense that they could be designed either in order to 'examine', or as an ornamentation of, this model.

Ex. 4.22. 1683 Sonata 4/ii: derivation of materials.

(a) Possible tonal model.

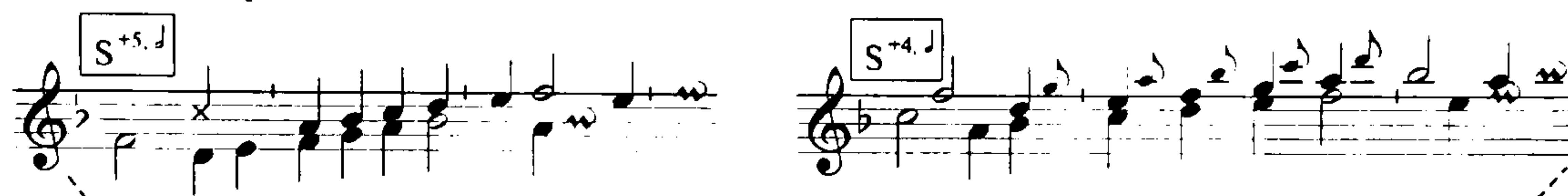
Since, then, the fugal materials of Purcell's canzona take precedence over, rather than having been derived from, the harmonic context in which they are heard, the movement cannot be 'about' the manipulation of a tonal model as was the case in the Corelli fugue. When we turn to Purcell's treatment of the melodic aspects of his subjects this becomes even clearer: embedded within the statement of the two subjects that begins the work is a two-voice imitative working of the first subject (Ex. 4.22b). This two-part complex must therefore be understood in melodic terms, as the combination of two lines; the result may be similar in harmonic effect to the tonal model in Ex. 4.22a, but its incorporation of two statements of an identical point further undermines the notion of the subject as an ornamentation of such a model.

The treatment of the subject later in the movement further confirms this melodic and imitative emphasis in Purcell's technique. In bars 36-8 he introduces a second combination, a minim apart at the interval of a fifth (facilitated by shortening the first note of the subject to a crotchet); the only other two-part interlock that works at a distance of less than one bar. Purcell uses the two complexes several times, interchanging the plain and ornamented versions of the point (first and second subjects) in order to achieve variety. On the last page of the fugue, there is even evidence of attempts to build larger, three-part complexes from these two combinations. In bars 50 to 53, for example, Purcell attempts to combine the original two-voice complex with the new stretto (Ex. 4.23), requiring a number of alterations to the second subject (vln I) in order to avoid simultaneous parallel fifths and octaves with the bass. An even more complicated passage arises in the closing bars from an attempt to overlay two statements of the opening two-voice complex of the movement; in this case, the entry in the bass is interrupted with a pedal on the fifth degree in order to avoid parallel fifths with the first violin.

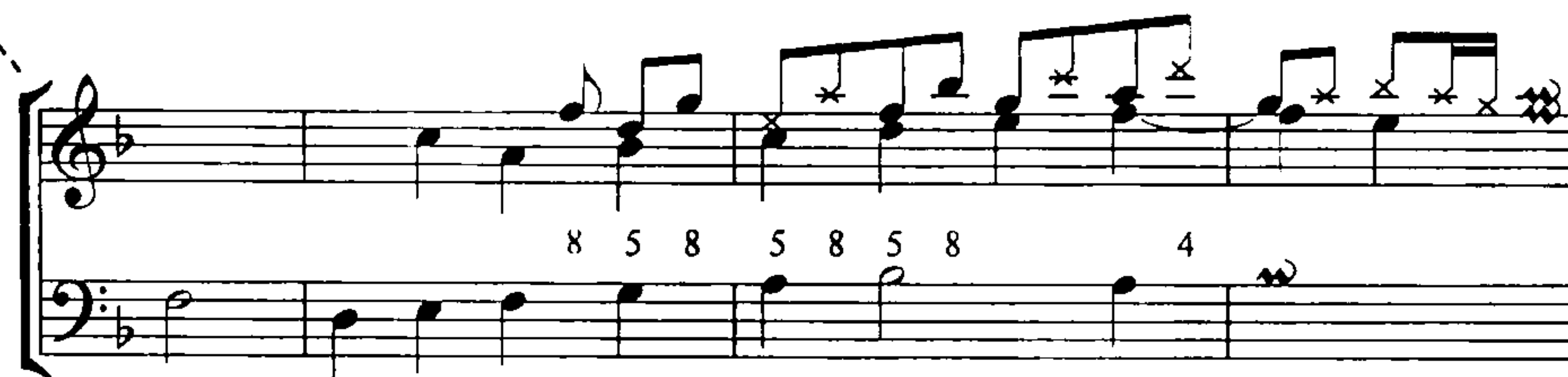
If, then, an approach to Purcell's music in terms of the 'workbench methods of the composer' results in an analysis of melodic and imitative, rather than harmonic processes, it remains to ask whether Wintle's methods of analysing 'tonal models' can afford any other insight for Purcell's music. As I showed in Ex. 4.22a, it is quite possible to hear Purcell's material in terms of a Schenkerian fundamental descent towards a cadence. The problem only arises when attempting to show that this model formed the basis of Purcell's creative process. As an indication of the initial relationship between melodic and harmonic elements, however, the tonal model might

Ex. 4.23. 1683 Sonata 4/ii, bb. 50-53.

(a) Two viable complexes



(b) Two interlocks combined



(c) Final form of passage



still be useful, since it offers a standard against which later occurrences of the subject material can be assessed. This, indeed, is an issue that would have been familiar to contemporaries, as Roger North shows when he writes that

The great danger in conducting fuges, is the going too farr for variety, and so by tossing the point from to [*sic*] key to key the ayre of the genuine key is lost, which is unwholesome for the musick; and in that respect Corelli's fuges are admirable, for tho' driven thro' variety enough, yet the air of the key is preserved.⁵⁸

In other words, for North, the presentation of the subject at several different transpositions risks obscuring the sense of key. He recognises that the melodic aspect of an imitative point does not exist in isolation; even at the beginning of the fugue, when it is heard unaccompanied, the listener understands it in the context of certain implied harmonies (the tonal model). If the subject is subsequently transposed and combined with itself, as is the case in Purcell's fugues, the listener is forced to reinterpret its harmonic implications, otherwise he will lose his grasp of the tonality of the work.

In one sense this is evident from Ex. 4.22b alone: since this opening complex incorporates two entries of the subject, it follows that the two are heard differently against the same harmonic progression, rather than being themselves designed to elucidate it. Similarly, when a different combination is used we can see that the relationships change yet again. This is true of the second subject combination in

⁵⁸ North, p. 180.

bars 36-9, and of the passage in bars 49-50 in which the first combination (that in Ex. 4.22b), here with both entries given in the decorated form of the second subject, begins in C and ends with a cadence in B \flat . Both of the examples of larger, three-part complexes cited above also introduce new harmonic contexts. In a texture like this, the tonal implications of the subject simply cannot remain constant like they do in the Corelli, and a listener, like North, who is unable to assimilate the new harmonic contexts in which the subject is heard, will be left tonally disorientated.

Wintle's analysis of Corelli's fugue in terms of its 'tonal models' thus has much to offer in terms of understanding the fundamental difference between Corelli's technique and that of Purcell. Its application to Purcell's F major canzona broadly confirms the observations made at the start of this section: Purcell's compositional process begins not with a harmonic unit like the 'tonal model', but with subjects derived from melodic sources, which can be imitative complexes or thoroughbass patterns implied by a particular fragment of bass melody or, as here, both. The remainder of a movement consists of the interrogation of this subject material from an imitative and motivic point of view, rather than the examination of the underlying harmonic processes. Indeed, whereas in Corelli's music the subject, with its ornamental role, can be used to draw attention to the affinity between different forms of the tonal model, in Purcell's canzona the new imitative combinations are themselves used to create new harmonic contexts. Purcell's interest in the exhaustive pursuit of the potential of his material, in arcane imitative devices and in musical artifice in general are therefore just as strong here as in the fantasias, despite the fact that they exist here alongside other characteristics that seem to be derived, however obliquely and idiosyncratically, from his study of Italian music.

PROGRESSIONS AND FUGAL MATERIALS AFTER THE FIRST PLATFORM

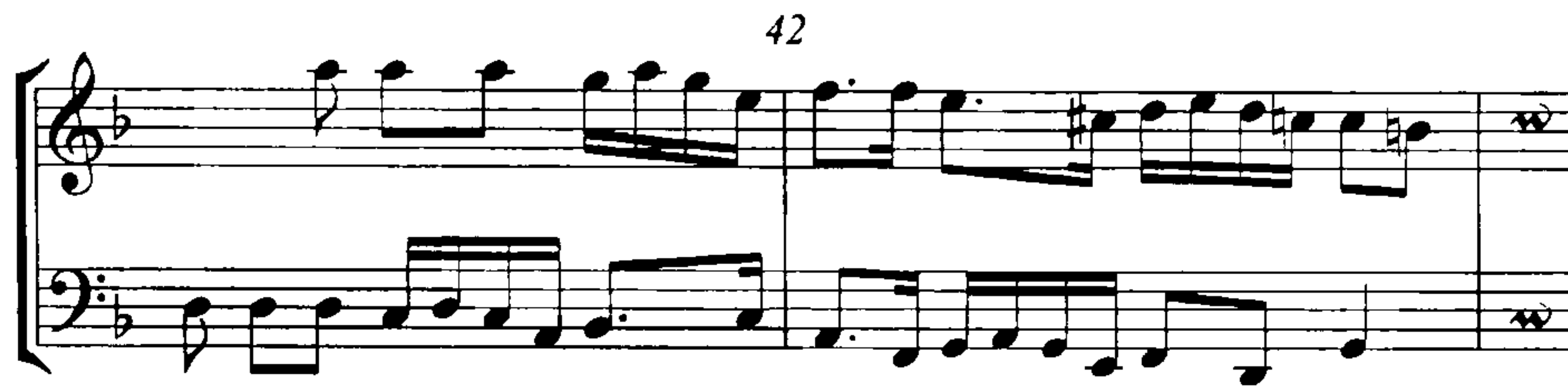
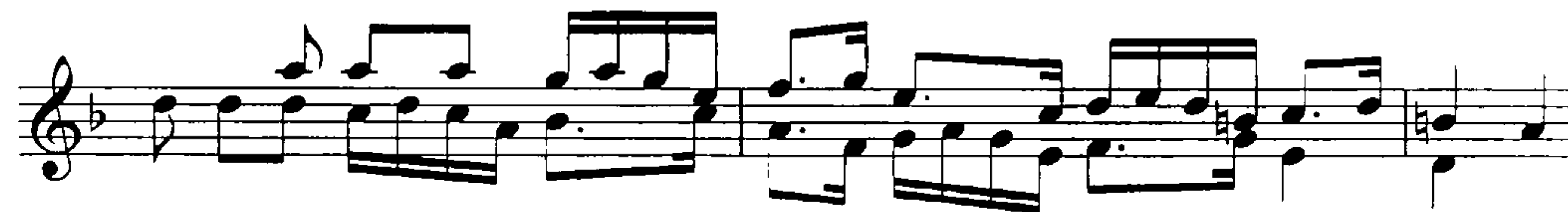
The foregoing observations account well for Purcell's attitudes towards the handling of counterpoint in the expositions of his sonata fugues, as well as the means by which he derived the materials for his fast fugal movements. In many ways these are the easiest aspects of these works to appreciate, since they are the characteristics that remain fundamentally constant in most sonata fugues. In the remainder of this chapter, however, I revert to the more piece-specific approach taken in Chapter 3 in

order to offer particular examples of how Purcell deals with the implications of these principles in the remainder of such movements. In particular, I examine how Purcell grappled with the sense of metrical regularity established by the periodic organisation of his triple-invertible first platforms, and how he brought the principles of compositional artifice directly to bear on the progressions that became such an important part of his musical language in the sonatas.

From the above analyses of 1683 Sonatas 3/ii and 4/ii it is apparent that many of the techniques Purcell exercised in the latter portions of his sonata fugues relied on the same principles of *fugeing* that he explored in the fantasias and that remained important in sonata movements like 1683 Sonata 1/i. There are movements which incorporate exhaustive imitative research and adapting of failed complexes (1697 Sonatas 1/ii and 8/i), inversion of subjects (1697 Sonata 1/ii) and even augmentation (1683 Sonata 10/iv). Such techniques have already been examined in Chapter 3, however; it is where they come into contact with the more specific characteristics of the sonata fugues that they can offer additional insights into Purcell's compositional approaches.

The strong periodicity of phrasing established by Purcell's 'catch-like' fugal expositions exerted a considerable influence on Purcell's attitudes towards *fugeing* in these movements, as can be seen once more in 1683 Sonata 3/ii. The metrical regularity of the opening platform, generated by the strict rotation and reiteration of its triple-invertible complex, builds up such a strong momentum that even potentially more artificial treatment of the subject is subordinated to its pattern of cadence. When Purcell writes a pair of stretto entries of the first subject in bar 41, he alters the end of each entry in order to cadence on C at the end of a two-bar phrase, following the metrical pattern established in the exposition rather than allowing the stretto, which in itself is perfectly viable, to run its course to a cadence on A (see Ex. 4.24a and b). The two-bar pattern is not broken until the imitative episode in bars 43-7 (see Ex. 4.17 above); the remaining three-voice stretto is allowed to extend past the two-bar phrase, before dissolving into a passage of imitation based on a new, chromatic subject, a final rhetorical defeat for the regular phrasing of the movement (Ex. 4.24c).

The almost mechanical regularity of this piece is common in canzonas built on triple-invertible counterpoint, but it rarely extends beyond the opening platform as it does here. Those fugues that have freer expositions tend to avoid it, either by working

Ex. 4.24. 1683 Sonata 3/ii: use of stretto.**(a) Stretto (bb. 41-3, bass and vln I), altered to cadence on C after two bars.****(b) The same stretto, shown complete.****(c) Three-voice stretto (bb. 50 ff) with imitative continuation.**

two subjects that have slightly different metrical qualities, by inserting free counterpoint between fugal entries (what would be called a ‘codetta’ in a fugue by Bach) or by disguising the repetition through the introduction of additional entries. Curiously, however, Purcell almost never seeks to vary his phrasing or harmony by extending progression based subjects sequentially in order to modulate, an obvious method of achieving variety that would exploit the transient nature of such progressions in Italian sonatas. Instead, the progressions remain trapped inside the stable metrical unit of the subject, emphasising both the melodic integrity of the subject and the essentially stable harmonic role of the progression in many of Purcell’s fugal movements. Indeed, Purcell’s subject progressions are so far removed from the modulatory function of their Italian counterparts that when he does require a subject entry to modulate, this is most often achieved not by using the properties of the progression, but by reworking the cadence of the subject itself.

This technique is particularly obvious in some of the dance-inspired, triple-time sonata fugues. Unsurprisingly, such movements tend to exhibit even more hypermetrical regularity than the canzonas and other duple-time fugues, frequently retaining the phrasing patterns of the subject throughout. At the same time, many of

these dance fugues show a concern for compositional artifice that is just as strong as in Purcell's other fugal movements, and certainly more strict than one would expect to find in music that was truly intended to be danced to. A good example is the third movement of 1683 Sonata 8, in G major. This fugue has a subject built on a descending 6-5 progression (see 2.d in Ex. 4.7 above, and the brief discussion on page 189), and consists entirely of four-bar phrases until the very end, when a series of stretto entries causes the last two phrases to be telescoped into seven bars.

Within this restrictive framework, Purcell nevertheless shows a characteristic interest in the imitative properties of his material. The second countersubject is derived from an aborted two-voice complex on the main subject, and later in the movement we hear more complete, and more conspicuously worked stretti at the fifth, a bar apart (bb. 90-93 and 120-123) and at the octave, two bars apart (bb. 118-120). The subject is also inverted at bar 108, and a subsequent inverted entry incorporates a stretto at the unison, a minim apart (106-9). Even more interesting, however, is the way Purcell manages to achieve harmonic variety and even a logical harmonic trajectory, in a scheme that allowed for no variation of phrase length or introduction of additional, modulatory material. After a long triple-invertible exposition consisting of seven statements of the original complex, and the expected alternation of cadences on the key note and fifth of the scale, he sets about reworking the end of the subject into an impressive array of alternative cadences (Ex. 4.25).

Ex. 4.25. 1683 Sonata 8/iii: cadential alterations to subject.

(a) Alternative endings of subject.

62

90

94

102

(b) Subject inverted with alternative endings used.



Such variety of cadence did nothing, however, to alter the overriding effect of metrical regularity in this fugue. In 1697 Sonata 1/iv, by contrast, Purcell uses *fugeing* actively to subvert the metrical regularity expected in such dance fugues. This movement is almost identical in organisation to 1683 Sonata 8/iii: it begins with a triple-invertible exposition incorporating seven statements of the complex in Ex. 4.26a, and maintains four-bar phrasing well after the end of the first platform. Instead of allowing this regularity to dominate the sound of the music, though, Purcell immediately upsets the listener's perception of the periodicity by introducing a close stretto, at the distance of a minim, immediately after the end of the exposition (Ex. 4.26b). While the music still cadences after four bars, the stretto is sufficiently disorientating to make the cadence sound as if it has been displaced. In the following two phrases Purcell intensifies this ambiguity, first by extending an idea from the second subject (vln II in Ex. 4.26a) into a succession of four crotchets falling by thirds (bb. 128-31), and then by transferring this idea to the bass, using the sighing suspensions from the third subject in the violins to create a hemiola effect.

The four-bar phrasing is finally defeated in the phrase from bar 140, in which Purcell attempts another stretto at the distance of a minim, this time at the octave. In order to make this work, he shortens each bar of the subject to just two minim beats, with the result that the metre is once again disrupted (Ex. 4.26c). At the same time, the sequential part of the subject finishes a bar earlier than it would have done in its original form, with the result that Purcell has to compose additional material to complete the four-bar phrase. The effect is to almost completely remove the sense of regularity: the basic alteration to the subject is apprehended easily, but the

Ex. 4.26. 1697 Sonata 1/v: manipulation of metre.

(a) Triple-invertible subject complex.

104

7 6 7 6

(b) Passage immediately after opening platform.

124

♯4/2 6 5 4/2 6 9 7 6 5 4 ♯3

128

132

6 6 6/5 6/5 6 6 7 6 ♯

(c) Shortening of subject in order to accomodate stretto.

140

6 6 ♯

(d) Closing bars.

153

Grave

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 7/♯ 6 6 ♯ ♯ 6 ♯

progression, despite the fact that it has been contracted, seems to reinforce its integrity. The extension to the cadence therefore sounds like an added bar, creating the impression of a longer phrase even though the cadence falls after four bars as had been the pattern throughout the movement. After this cadence, the four-bar phrasing suddenly dissolves. A six-bar phrase reworks the metrically unstable bars 128-135, and then the groups of crotchets from bar 128 take over. The *Grave* that closes the sonata (Ex. 4.26d) is doubly effective since it recasts this four-crotchet idea in duple time: by drawing on the conflict of metres in the preceding bars, it completes the process of metrical dissolution that has characterised the movement since the end of the opening platform.

There is one fugue among Purcell's canzonas that uses a thoroughbass progression not as a source of subject material, but as the basis for episodes as Corelli did in his sonatas. The second movement of 1697 Sonata 10 turns out to be the exception that proves the rule in this respect, since in this movement Purcell uses his most artificial techniques not in order to manipulate the subject, as was the case in most fugues, but to transform the progression-based episodes.

This sonata is often cited as Purcell's most modern and Italianate example, and the trumpet-like contours of the subject together with extensive use of 5-6 and 6-5 progressions in its second movement appear to support this hypothesis. The fugue opens with a triple-invertible exposition based on the three-part complex in Ex. 4.27, after which comes a long passage of progressions (Ex. 4.28a). The first (P1) is a 5-6 progression with sequential repetition of a new motif in the violins over a rising bass; Purcell then rotates and inverts this, resulting in a falling line in the upper voices over a sequential bass (P2), following it with a further passage based on P1. Already, then, Purcell is treating his progressions not just as simple harmonic patterns to be imported as 'stock' sonata material, but as thematic material to be manipulated and examined.

Ex. 4.27. 1697 Sonata 10/ii: triple-invertible complex.



Ex. 4.28. 1697 Sonata 10/ii: Canzona.

(a) Manipulation of thoroughbass progressions.

The diagram illustrates the manipulation of thoroughbass progressions. It shows four musical staves labeled P1, P2, P3, and P4. P1 and P2 are connected by an arrow labeled "Parts rotated". P3 and P4 are connected by an arrow labeled "Parts rotated and inverted". P1 and P3 are connected by an arrow labeled "Parts rotated". P2 and P4 are connected by an arrow labeled "Parts rotated and inverted". A central box labeled "Harmonic retrograde" has arrows pointing to P1, P2, P3, and P4.

(b) Palindromic organisation of materials.

	Progressions			Middle entries		Middle entries		Progressions				
21-33	33-35	36-38 ¹	38 ¹ -40 ²	40 ² -42	43-4	45-6	47-8	49-50	51 ¹ -53	54-57 ²	57 ³ -59	60-63
[exp.]	Imitative entries of subject cadence	P <u>1</u>	P <u>2</u>	P <u>1</u>	Subject	Subject inverted	Subject inverted	Subject	P <u>3</u>	P <u>4</u>	P <u>3</u>	Imitative entries of subject cadence

After a series of entries of the original subject in bars 43-50, Purcell again returns to these progressions. This time, however, P1 is simply rotated, placing the sequential repetition in the bass and the rising scales in the upper parts to generate P3 (Ex. 4.28a). The same process is applied to P2 in bars 54-6, resulting in a simple succession of 6-5s over a falling bass. This final transformation results in harmonic retrograde of P1; thus the two passages of progressions effectively mirror one another other.

This ‘mirror’ effect not only affected Purcell’s manipulation of the progressions, but also gave rise to a structural plan reminiscent of some fantasia sections in its reliance on artifice as the controlling aspect of the music. Purcell’s manipulation of the thoroughbass patterns is superbly subtle: progressions P1 and P4 are not only harmonic retrogrades of one another, but the sequences built on them are constructed in such a way as to achieve this retrograde by the melodic inversion of the material. Thus the moments at which the progressions change, at bars 38³, 40³, 54 and 56³, are points at which melodic inversion *causes* harmonic retrogression. Furthermore, the mirroring of the two progressions at each of these moments is replicated on a large scale by the rotation of the parts the second time the passage of progressions is heard, in bars 51-59. Purcell even draws attention to this large-scale mirroring by inverting the original fugue subject in bar 45, thereby repeating at the level of the movement the causal relationship between inversion and retrogression. Everything that happens between the end of the opening platform (b. 33) and the end of this inverted entry (b. 47¹) is repeated in reverse order from bar 31 to the end, creating a large-scale palindrome (Ex. 4.28b).

Purcell’s use of such progressions only in these very limited circumstances, when their incorporation served some other compositional purpose, again shows the side of his technique that sought to test his materials, setting up problems and working through them in the course of a fugue. Purcell’s avoidance of episodic progressions elsewhere was itself related to this penchant for compositional artifice: the kind of formulaic use of stock patterns found in Italian sonatas, as we saw in the fugue from Corelli’s op. 1 above, simply could not provide opportunity for the display of imitative or other forms of artifice that Purcell sought to maintain in his sonatas. By choosing, instead, to tie the thoroughbass progressions to the very invention of his fugal materials, Purcell gave his sonatas an Italian-sounding harmonic character

without having to compromise this compositional ideal: having allowed the thoroughbass progressions to dominate the presentation of the subjects in the opening platforms of his fugues, he was free to subject his materials to a more stringent examination in the remaining portions of the movements. Similarly, Purcell's invertible first platforms in these sonata fugues may be less artificial in themselves than the use of counterpoint in his fantasias, but they represent a particular aspect of the Italian sonata that ensured a greater artifice than was present in less systematic approaches to fugal expositions like that of Corelli. From this vantage point Purcell's relationship with the Italian style is thus far more proactive than the patterns of 'influence' between composers traced by earlier Purcellian commentators. His remarkably individual assimilation and transformation of these stylistic phenomena offers an equally productive point of departure for analysis as did the process of *fugeing* in the fantasias, and greatly adds to the overall picture of a composer who sought at this stage in his career to promote more artificial and 'serious' forms of musical expression over what he saw as the superficial preoccupations of his contemporaries.

CHAPTER 5

The Poetics of Musical Artifice

ARTIFICE AND DANCE

Of all the kinds of movement in Purcell's fantasias, the dance movements would seem the least likely to have inspired the kind of self-conscious display of musical artifice observed in his fantasias and sonata fugues. Christopher Simpson observed that in the more serious dances (the pavan, galliard, and Alman) 'you will often hear some touches of Points or Fuges; *but not insisted upon, or continued*, as in Fancy-Musick' [my emphasis].¹ When it came to the remaining dances, furthermore, he left the reader in no doubt as to their expected technical merits:

I need not enlarge my discourse to things so common in each ones Ears, as *Corants, Sarabands, Jiggs, Countrey-Dances*, &c., of which sorts, I have known some, who by a natural aptness and accustomed hearing of them would make such like (being untaught) though they had not so much Skill in Musick as to Prick them down in Notes.²

Yet Purcell's sonatas contain numerous examples of dance movements that required real compositional and imitative ingenuity, coupled with a depth of understanding of the demands of dance rhythms far beyond the intuitive parroting of familiar idiomatic traits to which Simpson alludes. Such movements provide an opportunity to assess the scope of Purcell's promotion of artifice as a preliminary to the more theoretical discussion of its status in his ideas about music, and in the wider cultural and artistic context of Restoration discourse, that follows.

¹ Simpson, p. 117.

² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

Like Corelli's opp. 1 and 3, Purcell's two sets of sonatas contain no designated dance movements, but nevertheless incorporate numerous pieces that adopt dance-like characteristics. Very few of the dance-like fugues encountered in Chapter 4 could be described as true dances: despite their triple metre and comparatively regular phrasing, they tend to allude to general dance characteristics rather than adopting the rhythmic patterns of any identifiable dance genre. In his internal slow movements, however, often marked *Largo* or *Poco Largo*, it is very often possible to identify features that suggest that Purcell was imagining the saraband or minuet. The fourth movement of 1683 Sonata 1, for example, with its almost obsessive heavy emphasis on the second beat of the bar and harmonic changes two or three times each bar, is strongly suggestive of the saraband. The second movement of 1697 Sonata 3, meanwhile, is a minuet: here the essential harmonies generally change only once per bar, reinforcing the rhythmic emphasis on the first beat that gives the minuet its more lilting, one-in-a-bar character when compared with the saraband.

Other movements are admittedly harder to pin down to one type or the other. The penultimate movement of 1697 Sonata 10, for example, is less consistent in its harmonic rhythm: although the first strain (bb. 78-93; the repeat in this movement is written out) generally has one essential harmony per bar, the more imitative second strain increasingly emphasises movement at the crotchet beat. The accent on the second beat (bb. 78, 80, 82, 84 and often in 100-111), while characteristic of the saraband in particular, is actually common in both dances.³ In a case like this, it may well be that the tempo chosen in performance plays a large part in determining which dance type the piece most resembles: at a relatively slow tempo the players would naturally emphasise the strong second beats of the saraband, whereas a quicker tempo would encourage a one-in-a-bar feel, with the third crotchets in bars 78, 82, 86, 90 and 103-5 felt as the up-beats often found in minuets. Purcell's tempo indication is of little help here: in the preface to the 1683 Sonatas he describes *Largo* as simply 'a middle movement'.⁴

³ See Meredith Ellis Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 117. For the similarities and subtle differences between the two dances, compare the tables on pp. 70 and 96-7. A more concise summary can be found on p. 18 [table I].

⁴ 1683, preface [n. p.].

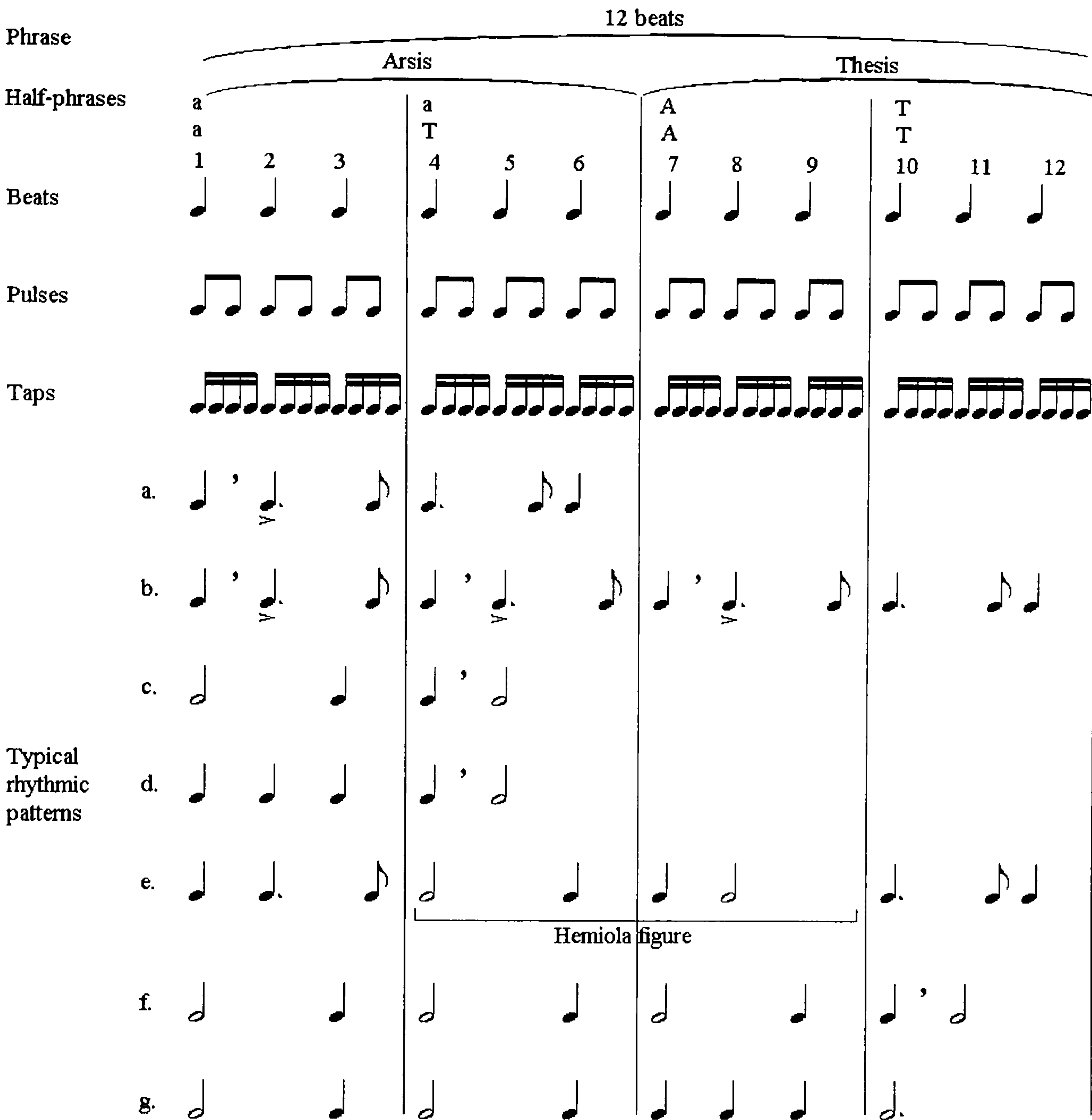
These are stylised movements not intended for actually dancing to, and since Purcell did not designate them as one dance it would be rather overly pedantic to draw too many conclusions from his failure to follow one set of typical characteristics in any one piece. Far more revealing are the similarities of rhythm and metre in the saraband and minuet, which offer a useful model for Purcell's treatment of phrasing and rhythmic organisation in those movements that display features of either or both dance types. Both require music grouped in phrases of four bars, with a point of repose or release in the fourth bar (very often with an intermediate repose/release in the second bar as well, dividing the phrase into two groups of two bars). I adopt the terms 'Arsis' and 'Thesis' in this context to describe moments of motion and repose, as described by Little and Jenne.⁵ These should not be confused with Purcell's use of *per arsin et thesin* to describe imitation by inversion; the context should always make this distinction clear.

Purcell was quite capable of writing simple dance movements uncomplicated by fugal or imitative procedure, and an example from the sonatas will serve as a useful example of his understanding of these rhythmic characteristics. The fourth movement of 1683 Sonata 1, as I suggested above, is very clearly related to the saraband. The typical rhythmic organisation of a saraband can be represented as in Fig. 5.1, which is reproduced from two tables given by Little and Jenne. At the top of the table is the metrical organisation into phrases of 2+2 bars described above, followed by the common divisions of time: harmonic changes occur primarily on the 'beat' and 'pulse' levels, which are also the levels with which dance steps would coincide. The letters 'A' and 'T' represent Arsis and Thesis, with lower case letters adopted for less strongly arsic or thetic points in the metre. In the second half of the table a number of characteristic rhythmic patterns are listed.

1683 Sonata 1/iv behaves entirely in keeping with this rhythmic profile (the first strain of the movement is given in Ex. 5.1). The surface rhythms are clearly those in Little and Jenne's pattern 'e', with a modified last bar. The eight-bar strain is made up of two four-bar phrases, each of which concludes with a decisive Thesis marked not only by the resolution of cadential tension but also by the maintenance of

⁵ Little and Jenne, *Dance*, pp. 16-17.

Fig. 5.1. Model for the saraband dance rhythm.⁶



a single harmony for the entire bar, in contrast to the changes of harmony on the second beats of all other bars except the first. The strain is made to sound self-contained by the provision of greater harmonic repose in bar 127 when compared with bar 123: the chord on B \flat is more stable as it is approached from its fifth, and its previous Arsis is itself stronger than that in bar 122 by virtue of the suspension on the first beat of the bar, thereby providing a greater harmonic tension to be released. The second strain of the movement provides a further four phrases with exactly the same organisation and rhythmic profile, slightly modified in the last phrase to recall the suspension of bar 126 and thereby draw a connection between the cadences of the two strains.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

Ex. 5.1. Purcell, 1683 Sonata 1/iv: first strain.

120

a a A T a t A T

Arsis Thesis Arsis Thesis

2 phrases = 1 strain of dance

The apparent simplicity of this scheme belies the exceptionally taut construction of the movement. The repetitive periodicity of the four-bar phrases is carefully handled with an attention to the relative weight of their cadences, with those in bars 123, 131 and 139 relatively weak so as to maintain some tension towards the stronger resolutions four bars later. Purcell's part-writing is almost implausibly restricted when compared with the freedom of the three preceding movements: the violins rarely cross, and in the second strain proceed almost exclusively in parallel thirds, overwhelmingly in contrary motion to the bass. The few departures from this restriction provide some of the most piquant harmonies, as for example in bars 132-3 and 136-8. This is one of the most appealing of all Purcell's dance movements in the sonatas, and although the artificial techniques he adopted elsewhere are entirely absent, Purcell still seems to have revelled in the challenge of the tight restrictions he placed on its phrasing and part-writing.

Other dance movements reveal a much greater concern for compositional artifice, however. The second movement of 1683 Sonata 8 and 1683 Sonata 12/iii both incorporate invertible counterpoint, as does 1697 Sonata 1/iii, which Martin Adams criticises as 'a case of technique triumphing over process'.⁷ Several internal dance movements in the sonatas seek to introduce more explicit forms of artifice by breaking into imitation in the second strain, after a homophonic first strain that retains the regular phrasing of the saraband/minuet rhythmic model (1683 Sonatas 6/iii, 7/iii and 9/ii; 1697 Sonatas 3/ii, 10/iv).

The third movement of 1683 Sonata 5 is one of few dance movements in the sonatas in which Purcell takes this process one step further and constructs a whole dance movement using the techniques of *fugeing*. Other dance-inspired movements that incorporate imitation (including 1683 11/iv, which is a full-blown fugue)⁸ tend to

⁷ Adams, p. 112; For the two 1683 Sonata movements see Tilmouth, pp.119-20.

⁸ For an analysis of this movement see Adams, pp. 115-17.

use short points which are imitated at the distance of one or two bars, thereby leaving the metric structure largely intact (as in 1697 Sonata 3/ii). In 1683 Sonata 5/iii, however, the imitative materials derive from a longer melody that might equally have been conceived as material for a homophonic dance. As a result, the demands of dance rhythm and compositional artifice come into direct conflict. Purcell's handling of this conflict has much to reveal both about his approach to *fugeing* and to the composition of dances.

Like 1683 Sonata 1/iii, Sonata 5/iii draws heavily on the characteristic rhythms of the saraband (Ex. 5.2; compare Fig. 5.1, rhythm 'a'). Its opening phrase clearly spans four bars, with a preliminary Thesis in the second bar, and a more conclusive repose in the fourth. This final Thesis is interrupted, however, by the entry of the second violin in the fourth bar, with the same melody a fourth lower. The result is an artificial Arsis in bar 48, as the four-bar phrases of the two violin parts overlap by one bar (see Ex. 5.3). The regular four-bar phrasing of the saraband has been broken by the incorporation of imitation; instead, we hear a longer phrase unit comprising seven bars, to the arrival at the fifth of the key in bar 51. The continuation of the first violin part (bb. 48³-51) is consequently just three bars long.

This is not the last word for the influence of the saraband phrasing, however. Despite the metric displacement of the second violin entry, the harmonic phrase implied by the first violin is sufficiently strong to provide the sense of Thesis expected in bar 48, causing a temporary disjunction between harmony and rhythm. In the course of the four-bar phrase in the second violin, harmony and rhythm are realigned. This realignment relies largely on the thoroughbass part: by outlining a falling tetrachord in bars 48-51 it creates a series of suspensions in the first violin, supplying points of harmonic stress that are not inherent within the two imitative parts. The suspended major seventh in bar 50 is strongly arsic, and coincides with the

Ex. 5.2. 1683 Sonata 5/iii, opening (outer parts).

Ex. 5.3. 1683 Sonata 5/iii, opening (complete).

The musical score for Ex. 5.3, 1683 Sonata 5/iii, opening (complete), is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 45-51) features three staves: Treble, Bass, and Thoroughbass. The Treble staff contains a sequence of notes labeled 'a', 't', 'A', 'T', 'a', 'A', 'T'. The Bass staff contains notes labeled 'a', 't', 'A', 'T', 'a', 'A', 'T'. The Thoroughbass staff contains notes labeled 'a', 't', 'A', 'T', 'a', 'A', 'T'. Brackets below the staves indicate 'Arsis' and 'Thesis' periods. The second system (measures 52-55) features three staves: Treble, Bass, and Bass. The Treble staff contains notes labeled 'a', 'a', 'A', 'T'. The Bass staff contains notes labeled 'a', 'a', 'A', 'T'. The Bass staff contains notes labeled 'a', 'a', 'A', 'T'. Brackets below the staves indicate 'Arsis' and 'Thesis' periods.

third bar of the subject in the second violin, thereby creating a strong pull towards the thetic resolution of the phrygian cadence in bar 51.

Such a process of disjunction and realignment allows the listener to hear both phrases as intact, creating the illusion of a phrase unit made up of two four-bar phrases when only seven bars have actually been heard. In this way, the demands of the dance rhythms and the imitative process are both met. At the same time, this view of how the first two imitative entries work has important consequences for how we understand Purcell's compositional process in this movement. Firstly, the continuation of the first violin part in bars 48³-51 must have been composed after the decision to imitate it at the distance of three bars, since both parts reach the cadence in bar 51 together. This continuation is treated as part of the subject throughout the movement, and extended to four bars when necessitated by the distance of imitation (e.g. bb. 51-4, vln II, 59-62 vln I). It is also markedly different in character to the original four-bar melody, with its heavy emphasis on the first beat of the bar and consistently anacrusic third beat; indeed, the effect is almost to place the very idioms of saraband and minuet in counterpoint with one another. Secondly, the importance of the thoroughbass part in this passage provides an important clue as to why this movement has an independent bass part, in contrast to almost all other movements in

the 1683 sonatas (in which the thoroughbass is a simplification of the melodic bass). Although the imitation of the subject is confined to the three melodic parts, these parts alone are incapable of providing the necessary harmonic stress to reinforce the rhythmic patterns of the dance. We have already seen how this extra part was needed for the success of the first seven bars, and the four-bar phrase from bar 51³ provides yet another example, here needed to reinforce a more conventional phrase length.

Purcell's ability, demonstrated in the opening bars quoted in Ex. 5.3, to manipulate the rhythm and harmony of this texture to such an extent that metrically 'misplaced' imitative entries could be introduced while maintaining the illusion of a regularly phrased, conventional dance rhythm, left him free in this movement to explore the potential for imitative artifice in as systematic a manner as in some fantasias. Although, as in the quoted bars, the imitation would result in phrases of irregular length, the integrity of the basic four-bar unit heard at the start of the movement ensured that the last entry of the point would always be heard as a conventional four-bar phrase. Much of the character of the movement thus derives from the moments of tension between conflicting entries of the point, and its subsequent resolution (as in the five-bar phrase in bars 59-63, caused by the imitation of the subject at the distance of one bar).

Hidden beneath such metrical games is an imitative one: Purcell incorporates imitation of the seven-bar subject at the beginning of each bar up to the sixth, restricting the intervals of imitation to the octave/unison and fourth/fifth (see Table 5.1). Only two viable two-voice interlocks are unused, and in both instances Purcell uses imitation at a different interval to provide entries at these distances. It is not until towards the end of the movement that he abandons this experiment with artifice. One final entry of the point, here in its extended version of eight, rather than seven bars, appears in the second violin at bar 83. Surrounding this, however, and continuing to the end of the movement, Purcell incorporates a freer imitative treatment of the more minuet-like second half of the point, exploiting its cadential qualities to provide a satisfactory close.

Like other movements in which Purcell explores 'artificial' imitative techniques, much of the harmonic planning of this piece can be attributed to the imitative work. The harmonic range is much more restricted than in passages like the opening of Fantasia 8, but the imitation nevertheless plays an important part in the first real

Table 5.1. 1683 Sonata 5/iii, imitative complexes.

Sigla	(unis./±8)	4 (+4/-5)	5 (+5/-4)
S ¹ bar			59-67
S ² bars	73-80		
S ³ bars			45-55, 52-62
S ⁴ bars		48-58, 64- 74, 55-66	
S ⁵ bars	59-71, 68-73		

modulation away from the key note A in the first 23 bars. In Ex. 5.4 the expected cadence on A in bar 67 would coincide with the fourth bar of the point in the first violin. This entry is itself imitated, however, at the lower fifth, four bars later (the entry in the second violin, b. 68): the result is a turn to D minor, which Purcell then reinforces by introducing the necessary chromatic alterations in the non-imitative parts (B \flat in the bass, b. 68; C \sharp in the thoroughbass, b. 69). The introduction of the F in the thoroughbass, bar 67 makes the modulation all the more effective by interrupting the expected resolution to A, thereby delaying the sense of repose until the cadence on D in bar 71. Here, once more, is an intersection between the rhythmic organisation of the dance and the artificial method of composition: the interruption of this cadence creates a suspension in the second violin, introducing an emphatic Arsis where the listener expects a Thesis and thereby projecting the harmonic tension of the preceding bars across a further four, to create one modulatory eight-bar phrase.

Ex. 5.4. 1683 Sonata 5/iii, bb. 66-71.

The musical score for Ex. 5.4, 1683 Sonata 5/iii, bb. 66-71, is presented in three staves: Treble, Alto, and Bass. The score begins at measure 66. The Treble staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. The Alto staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. The Bass staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 below the notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

IN SEARCH OF PURCELL'S 'POETICS' OF MUSIC

If we are to accept the centrality of compositional artifice like that in 1683 Sonata 5/iii to Purcell's approach to music, it would be useful to be able to point to evidence from outside his musical works that would support this assertion. This is especially true if such an analytical paradigm is to hold any claims to be more representative than, or to afford insights unavailable to, the traditional approaches that I have already criticised as technically inappropriate or even anachronistic. Without such corroboration, such a system is susceptible to the same criticisms: it may be considered self-fulfilling, and can be argued to represent the preconceptions of the analyst as much as it does the qualities of the music under consideration. I believe, however, that there is ample evidence in contemporary sources to demonstrate that the analytical potential of compositional artifice as a window onto the workings of Purcell's fantasias and sonatas is borne out by the existence of artifice as a recognisable category in the criticism of and commentary upon all art, including music, during the composer's lifetime.

Purcell's own comments on the poetics of his instrumental music are not only small in number, but also difficult to apply in a wider context, to the extent that their meaning is often ambiguous. Nevertheless, they serve as a useful starting point, even if only to demonstrate the problems with contemporary discourse on musical poetics. The prefatory comments to the 1683 sonatas provide an example:

Its Author, he has faithfully endeavour'd a just imitation of the most fam'd Italian Masters; principally, to bring the seriousness and gravity of that sort of Musick into vogue, and reputation among our Country-men, whose humor, 'tis time now, should begin to loath the levity, and balladry of our neighbours.⁹

This passage is perhaps the most quoted in all the literature on Purcell's sonatas, and the responses to it are almost as commonplace: questioning of the extent of Purcell's imitation of the Italian style, a search for the identity of the 'fam'd Italian Masters', comparative observations about the French and Italian national styles (based on the logical assumption about the 'neighbours' to whom Purcell refers), and often, a pointed tendency to note the persistence of apparently French idioms in Purcell's sonatas, despite his advocacy of the Italian. What links all of these approaches, of course, is the style-comparative approach to patterns of musical influence identified as

⁹ 1683, preface [n. p.].

so damaging and restrictive earlier: ultimately such questions are unanswerable, and divert attention away from the actual creative activities of the composer. I would argue that we should look beyond the apparently familiar terms in which Purcell expresses himself here – the imitation of acknowledged masters and the distinction between Italian and French styles, both of which carry a clear meaning today, but may correspond poorly with contemporary thought – to the admittedly brief information he gives us, in plain language, about his own tastes. That is, just what was it about Purcell's view of the sonata style that led him to commend the 'seriousness, and gravity' of the Italian style over one (French or otherwise) that he characterised so disparagingly with terms like 'levity' and 'balladry'?

On a simple level, it is easy to comprehend the binary opposition Purcell sets up here: in particular, the opposition between 'levity' and 'gravity' suggests a simple analogy with the physical properties of materials derived from pre-Newtonian physics and alchemy. The light/heavy distinction, however, is by itself relatively undefined: we are left with little indication of how these properties might manifest themselves in the music. We can guess at their implications – fast/slow, high/low pitch, sparse/dense texture, homophonic/polyphonic, dance/dirge – but such vague generalisations are no basis for the understanding of a whole musical outlook. Nor does it help if we look to the French/Italian dichotomy to provide more clues, since both styles provide examples of all of the categories suggested above.

A more useful context for the terms 'levity' and 'gravity' can be found in the use of these very terms to describe aspects of human behaviour, in accordance with the increasing interest in the human condition, and the causes of differing human characters, during the seventeenth century. One such description appears in Thomas Hobbes's *Humane Nature*, first published in 1650 and still very much current around the time that Purcell's comments were published, a second edition having appeared in 1684. Having considered the nature of sensation, and its ability to move the passions, Hobbes turns in Chapter 10 to consideration of why it should be, since he holds that the capacity of the mind is similar for all healthy individuals, that the same experiences can alter the passions more or less intensely for different people and at different times. This leads him to consideration of the differing 'constitutions' of individuals, among which he describes the characteristic of levity:

There is another Defect of the Mind, which Men call *Levity*, which betrayeth also *Mobility* in the Spirits, but in Excess. An Example whereof is in them that in the midst of any serious Discourse, have their Minds diverted to every little Jest or witty Observation; which maketh them depart from their Discourse by a Parenthesis, and from that Parenthesis by another, till at length they either lose themselves, or make their Narration like a Dream, or some studied Nonsense.¹⁰

Reading Purcell's comments in this context, we can form an idea of just what he meant when he criticised 'levity' in music. On the part of the composer, it meant an inability to sustain the musical elaboration of a particular idea, resulting in an ill-disciplined and illogical succession of events, which failed to articulate a larger purpose at the level of the movement or work. Purcell's preferred attribute, the opposite of levity, was gravity, in which, according to Hobbes, 'the End being the great and Master-Delight, directeth and keepeth in the Way thereto all other Thoughts'.¹¹ In other words, the overall subject of a discourse (or a musical work) imparted structure and coherence to its constituent parts.

It would be tempting to draw a comparison here between the attribute of 'gravity' as described by Hobbes and invoked by Purcell, and the kind of organic musical unity that we are accustomed to seeking in the music of the nineteenth century and, by extension, in other repertoires. Such a comparison is not strictly implied in Hobbes's descriptions of 'levity' and 'gravity', however: rather than asserting that a discourse should grow from a particular kernel of an idea, he simply states that its parts should each contribute to an overall argument, and not detract from its logic. Nor does the common appeal to 'motivic economy' in Purcell's works seem to fit in here, since this relies (as we saw in Chapter 2) on the hierarchical separation of surface melodic events from underlying harmonic ones, a separation that finds no simple parallel in Hobbes's discussion. Indeed, this suggests a more fundamental problem with using such descriptions of levity and gravity in human personalities to try to understand Purcell's use of these terms in the preface to his sonatas. The kinds of problems Hobbes attributes to levity of character could have any one of a number of musical analogues: disparate melodic elements, poor harmonic planning, inadequate part-writing, or even an inability to relate melodic and harmonic elements according to the rules of counterpoint and 'good air'. Thus we can observe the importance of the principle of musical 'gravity' to Purcell on a general level, but we must look

¹⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Humane Nature* (London: F. Bowman, 1650), pp. 124-25.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

elsewhere for more specific ways in which this gravity might be manifested in his music.

The one other source that details some of the qualities Purcell admired in the Italian sonata is the passage from ‘The Art of Descant’ in which he commends the sonata as an example of the use of the various fugal techniques:

Most of these different sorts of *Fugeing* are used in *Sonata's*, the chiefest Instrumental Musick now in request, where you will find *Double* and *Treble Fuges* also reverted and augmented in their *Canzona's*, with a great deal of Art mixed with good Air, which is the Perfection of a master.¹²

Here is a much clearer indication of what Purcell considered admirable in the music of others, and, we might infer, the qualities that he had endeavoured to incorporate into his own sonatas. ‘Art’ is clearly meant in the sense of ‘Artifice’, and the context suggests strongly that what Purcell understood by that was fugal technique, and formal imitative devices. It would therefore follow that one of the ways in which Purcell sought to achieve ‘gravity’ in his sonatas was by the employment of artifice such as *fugeing*, canon and other imitative techniques. At the same time, he tells us, this must be balanced with the principles of ‘good Air’. Truly great music, it seems, combines formal contrapuntal devices with a clear and accessible sense of melody, rather than pursuing dry imitative processes to the detriment of the immediate aural impression of the music.

The ideal of artifice can help to clarify what Purcell meant by ‘gravity’, and improve upon some of the common observations about Purcell’s sonatas in the light of his preface. In particular, it allows for a much more subtle reading of Purcell’s use of apparently French idioms than has previously been possible. In this respect, movements like the first movements of 1683 Sonata 10 and 1697 Sonata 4 have always made Purcell’s comments seem rather disingenuous: why did he apparently criticise the French style so harshly, yet remain willing to employ characteristically French dotted rhythms in these instances? If we read Purcell’s preface as advocating not the Italian style over the French, however, but gravity over levity, these movements take on a new meaning. Both movements are as ‘artificial’ in terms of imitation as almost any other movement in the sonatas; if they are in ‘French’ style, they are certainly not susceptible to the charge of ‘levity’. Rather, their degree of

¹² *AD*, p. 125.

compositional artifice subverts the popular conception of the French style to create a version of it that is every bit as grave and ‘serious’ as the Italian style Purcell so commended.

Having identified in Purcell’s own writings the categories of gravity and of artifice mixed with good air, that contribute to his notion of musical excellence, and noting that these seem to be reflected in the music that has been analysed above, we might ask why these particular attributes were so important to Purcell. In fact, comparatively little is known about how musicians, their patrons and audiences thought about the status of music in late seventeenth-century England. Compared to other artists, musicians appear to have been remarkably reticent about committing their thoughts on the nature of art and musical poetics to posterity: not for music an emerging criticism as Dryden and Rymer furnished for literature, and even the reasonably healthy range of musical treatises concerned itself largely with technical, rather than philosophical issues. Most of our knowledge is therefore derived either from observations concerning the surviving repertoire, or from close readings of the views of the small number of writers who have left comments on the subject. In the latter case particularly, these views are often construed as representative of wider opinions despite the fact that their authors were arguably peripheral to the musical establishment; Roger North in particular comes to mind here.

All this makes it all the more surprising that the relationship between music and the other arts is so often neglected in discussions of the artistic standing of Restoration music. The obvious exception is the theatre, which shares genres such as the ‘semi-opera’ with music though even here discussion is generally confined to the history of institutions, collaboration between artists, and the technical apparatus of the conjunction between the two arts.¹³ Rarely does one find discussion of any shared, or indeed contrasting, artistic aims.¹⁴ A wider consideration of music in the context of poetic principles expressed in other artistic disciplines would therefore serve a dual

¹³ See, for example, Price, *Purcell and the London Stage*, *passim*.

¹⁴ With perhaps two exceptions. Wilfrid Mellers makes a rather facile comparison between Purcell and Sir Christopher Wren, ‘whose greatness is classical and baroque in a way as odd as Purcell’s’ (Mellers, ‘The Heroism of Henry Purcell: Music and Politics in Restoration England’, in *Music and the Politics of Culture*, ed. Christopher Norris (London: Laurence and Wishart, 1989), 38-9. The other comes not from musicology but from literary history: Harold Love, ‘Constructing Classicism: Dryden and Purcell’, in *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Paul Hammond and D. Hopkins (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp. 92-112 *passim*.

purpose: not only would it situate music within the overall artistic landscape of the Restoration, but it could also suggest a way to fill in some of the gaps in the musical discourse. This is the purpose of the remainder of this chapter, which begins by sketching out some of the most important aims of Restoration art in general, before moving on to suggest how some of these aims can be observed in Purcell's music and in that of his contemporaries. Such an analysis of the composer's musical poetics, in the context of his immediate intellectual and artistic peers both from within and outside musical discourse, provides a context for the analytical insight gained by recognising the importance of artifice in his music. It also offers an alternative to the patterns of influence and style comparisons sought by previous commentators, which led, as we saw in the opening chapters, to the labelling of Purcell's music as conservative, old-fashioned, and peripheral. Finally, an understanding of these issues can help to explain the disappearance of Purcell's instrumental music so soon after his death, and its disparagement by writers like Charles Burney.

MUSIC AND ITS 'SISTER ARTS'

Art as mimesis

The idea that different artistic disciplines could pursue similar poetic goals was commonplace in the Restoration. In such a climate it is no surprise to find an important continental treatise on the art of painting – Charles Alphonse DuFresnoy's *De Arte Graphica* – translated by none other than John Dryden, the foremost English poet and dramatist of his day.¹⁵ Of course, Dryden was also a renowned Latin scholar, and his translations covered a broad spectrum of subjects. What makes his edition remarkable is the extended essay he appended to the beginning of the publication, entitled *A Parallel of Painting and Poetry*.¹⁶ As the title suggests, Dryden takes the opportunity to present a series of observations about the relationship between the two arts; the result is a valuable source of insight not only into Dryden's understanding of painting, but also into his views on the aims of his own art. Thus we learn that

¹⁵ Charles Alphonse DuFresnoy, *De Arte Graphica*, trans. John Dryden (London: W. Rogers, 1695).

¹⁶ John Dryden, 'A Parallel of Poetry and Painting', in *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford: OUP, 1926), II, 115-53.

The principal and most important part of painting is, to know what is most beautiful in nature, and most proper for that art [...] To imitate Nature well in whatsoever subject, is the perfection of both arts; and that picture, and that poem, which comes nearest to the resemblance of Nature, is the best.¹⁷

This basic principle, that art exists to imitate Nature, is the single most important starting point for any Restoration discussion of art. Outside the *Parallel* Dryden refers to it many times, not least in his most famous work of criticism, the *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* of 1668. The most important discussions in this work, which is in the form of a dialogue between four ‘persons whom their wit and quality have made known to all the town’ can begin in earnest only after all four have agreed on the premise that

A play ought to be, a just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject; for the delight and instruction of mankind.¹⁸

Such ideas were not, of course, confined to Dryden, or even to the domains of literature and the visual arts. A similar approach can be detected in the writings of Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St. Paul’s Cathedral. Wren’s ‘tracts’ on architecture, preserved in manuscript and later published by his son in the mid-eighteenth century, contain ample evidence that he understood the basic components of classical architecture to be derived directly from natural forms. In tract I, for example, he begins to explain the origins of the classical ‘orders’ by observing that, whereas in cooler climes buildings were needed for shelter from wind and rain,

In the hot Countries, where Civility first began, they desired to exclude the Sun only, and admit all possible Air for Coolness and Health: this brought in naturally the Use of porticoes, or Roofs for Shade, set upon Pillars. A Walk of trees is more beautiful than the most artificial Portico, but these not being easily preserved in Market-places, they made the more durable shades of Porticoes; in which we see they imitated Nature.¹⁹

In tract II he adds, in connection with early temples, that

Trees decaying with Time, or not equally growing (though planted at first in good Order) or possibly not having Room, when the Temples were brought into Cities, the like Walks were represented with Stone Pillars, supporting the more durable Shade of a Roof, instead of the Arbour of spreading Boughs; and still in the Ornaments of the Stone Work was imitated, (as well as the Materials would bear) both in the Capitals, Frizes and Mouldings, a Foliage, or sort of Work composed of Leaves, which remains to this Age.²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁸ Dryden, *Selected Criticism*, p. 20.

¹⁹ Quoted in Soo, *Wren's "Tracts" on Architecture*, p. 156.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 158.

The emphasis of Wren's comments is admittedly quite different from that of Dryden, but at the same time there is a strong underlying intellectual affinity: it is the fact that Wren appeals to the imitation of nature in order to justify the artistic (what we would call the aesthetic, rather than the scientific) aspects of his understanding of architecture that is crucial, rather than the exact terms of this appeal.

Given the relative scarcity of similar surviving discussions of music, it is fortunate for our purposes that perhaps the single most important indication that music shares in this artistic climate is demonstrably close to Purcell. I refer to the prefatory epistle to Purcell's published score of *Dioclesian* (1691). This preface has a complicated history: although signed by Purcell, the manuscript is in Dryden's hand and contains a large amount of material that never made it to the press.²¹ We can be sure, though, that Purcell was familiar with its contents, and must at least have approved of them to have allowed their inclusion in the edition. Although most often quoted for its comments about the relative standing of English music and that of the French and Italians, it also contains much material on the poetic status of music itself among the arts. Early on in the epistle we learn that

Musick and poetry have ever been acknowledged Sisters, which walking hand in hand, support (& *grace*) each other: And as poetry is the harmony of words, so musick is that of notes: and as poetry is a rise above prose and oratory, so is Musick the exaltation of poetry. Both of them may excel apart, but sure they are most excellent when they are joind, because then, nothing is wanting to either of their perfections: for then thus they appeare, like wit & beauty in the same person. Painting is indeed, another sister, being like [music and poetry], an imitation of Nature.²²

This passage is evidence enough of Dryden's hand in the composition of the preface: although it shares in the 'sisterhood' of the arts, music is understood as a kind of ornament to the text, an intensification of its rhetorical power similar to that of poetry when compared to prose forms. This is certainly a useful premise for the understanding of contemporary vocal music, but it is clearly of little use in the analysis of instrumental music. Rather, the common aim of all of these arts in the imitation of nature must be considered the basis for a more equal relationship between the artistic concerns of music and the other disciplines.

²¹ See Zimmerman, *Catalogue*, p. 306.

²² Quoted in *PR*, p. 89.

Nature and Artifice

Dryden understood that theatre was inherently artificial, and therefore that it could never be a true reflection of nature. His discussion of rhymed verse in the *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* provides a case in point. Crites, the most conservative participant in Dryden's dialogue and the sceptic in this argument, objects to the introduction of rhyme to the theatre on the grounds that it is unrealistic:

I am of opinion, that rhyme is unnatural in a play, because dialogue there is presented as the effect of sudden thought [...] since no man, without premeditation speaks in rhyme, neither ought he to do it on the stage. This hinders not but the fancy may be elevated to an higher pitch of thought than it is in ordinary discourse: for there is a probability that men of excellent and quick parts may speak noble things *ex tempore*: but those thoughts are never fettered with the numbers or sound of verse without study, and therefore it cannot but be unnatural to present the most free way of speaking, in that which is the most constrained.²³

In reply, Neander contends that if one objects to rhymed verse on the basis that it is not natural then one must equally object to any 'composed' forms of speech. Having thus shown that any stage dialogue is inherently artificial, Dryden is free to build a case for the higher artifice of rhymed verse on its own merits, because of its superior sound:

You say the stage is a representation of Nature, and no man in ordinary conversation speaks in rhyme. But you foresaw when you said this, that it might be answered; neither does any man speak in blank verse, or in measure without rhyme. Therefore you concluded, that which is nearest Nature is still to be preferred. But you took no notice that rhyme might be made as natural as blank verse, by the well placing of the words, etc. all the difference between them when they are both correct, is the sound in one, which the other wants.²⁴

Rather than abandoning the ideal of the imitation of nature, however, this is in line with Dryden's discussions elsewhere of the proper relationship between nature and artifice. He proposed that artifice be used to present a heightened, or perfected representation of nature; it was thus the responsibility of the artist to use all his skill, his artifice, in order to distil from nature in its imperfect, realised form those elements that he considered perfect, and present them together as an ideal, untainted image:

both [poetry and painting], as I said before, are not only true imitations of nature, but of the best Nature, of that which is wrought up to a nobler pitch. They present us with images more perfect than the life in any individual; and we have the pleasure to see all the scattered beauties of Nature united by a happy chemistry, without its deformities or faults.²⁵

²³ Dryden, *Selected Criticism*, p. 64.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁵ Dryden, 'Parallel', p. 137.

Such a view of the artificial poetics of Dryden's writing offers a highly attractive model for Purcell scholarship. Here, it seems, is a potential direct analogy with the kind of elevation of artificial compositional devices that we have observed in Purcell's fantasias and sonatas, and in the concept of gravity and the ideal of 'artifice mixed with good air' which he espoused in his writings. For the first time, it offers a way of assessing his use of complex fugal devices outside the potentially problematic binary oppositions (modern/conservative, Italian/French) that have traditionally been invoked in such discussions. Moreover, it situates Purcell's music squarely within the artistic climate of the Restoration, a cultural climate that was itself fascinated by the difference between appearance and reality, the tension between the mimetic aims and artificial means of all of the 'sister arts' examined above. Purcell seems to have been one of very few Restoration musicians seriously to have grappled with this problem, and the particular forms of it in music if anything resulted in an even more intense concentration on artificial devices and processes than can be found in the other arts.

'Of nearer kindred to the soule'

The principal poetic difference between Dryden's idea of 'wit written', as an imitation of nature enhanced by the artifice of the poet, and Purcell's pursuit of artifice in his instrumental works, is in the difference between the mimetic capabilities of verbal language and the non-referential sounds that constitute musical utterances. Indeed, this might be understood as the principal obstacle to the development of an extensive literature discussing the poetics of instrumental music at this period. Nevertheless, much of the apparatus of the later aesthetics of music that would emerge with works like Charles Avison's *Essay on Musical Expression* (1750) was already present in the intellectual consideration of other arts in the late seventeenth century. In particular, contemporary ideas about the ontology of language can be useful here in demonstrating how music and poetry could actually share expressive modes despite the apparent differences in their representative capabilities. John Locke, for example, recognised that words themselves were not part of the concepts to which they referred; rather, their meanings were contractually understood by members of a culture as a means of facilitating communication.²⁶ This represented a considerable

²⁶ John Locke, *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, ed. J. W. Yolton (London: Dent, 1961), II, Book 3: 'Of Words', esp. p.12: '[words] came to be made use of by men as *the signs of their ideas*:'

change from the platonic view, according to which the name of an object or concept was held to be part of its very essence.

Once one understands that language, too, has no intrinsic referential quality, the difference between language and music in terms of their expressive apparatus becomes simply one of degree. This leads to two important observations that apply equally to language and music: both are capable of carrying meaning only through mutual agreement between the communicating parties, and both have an internal logic that is not dependent upon the meaning conveyed (though the two may be related). In this respect both the literary arts and music are set apart from the other arts, in which the means of expression and the meaning are fundamentally indistinguishable: a sculpture or painting is the physical resemblance of the object or emotion it portrays, and while it may have additional accumulated meanings of the order of those attributed to language and/or music (allegorical meanings, for example), its meaning is conveyed with an immediacy that is not available to verbal language or music.

The most explicit acknowledgement of these characteristics of music in the period is perhaps the following passage from *The Spectator*, written by Joseph Addison and published in 1711:

Among the different Kinds of Representation, *Statuary* is the most natural, and shews us something *likest* the object that is represented. To make use of a common instance, let one who is Blind take an image in his Hands, and trace out with his Fingers the different Furrows and Impressions of the Chissel, and he will easily conceive how the shape of a Man, or Beast, may be represented by it; but should he draw his Hand over a *Picture*, where all is smooth and uniform, he would never be able to imagine how the several Prominencies and Depressions of a Human Body could be shewn on a plain Piece of Canvas, that has no Unevenness or Irregularity. *Description* runs yet further from the things it represents than Painting; for a Picture bears a real Resemblance to its Original, which Letters and Syllables are wholly void of. Colours speak all Languages, but Words are understood only by such a People or Nation [...] It would be yet more strange, to represent visible Objects by Sounds that have no Ideas annexed to them, and to make something like Description in *Musick*.²⁷

Addison was a generation younger than Purcell, but he was intimately familiar with the writings of John Locke, and with Dryden, with whom he corresponded in the 1690s. His formulation of the problem of musical expression in this passage is very similar to that of Dryden, though the poetic system he would develop was to be quite

not by any natural connexion that there is between particular articulate sounds and certain *ideas*, for then there would be but one language amongst all men; but by a voluntary imposition whereby such a word is made arbitrarily the mark of such an *idea*'.

²⁷ *The Spectator* [1711-14], ed. D. F. Bond, 5 vols (Oxford: OUP, 1965), III, 559 (No. 29: Tuesday, April 3, 1711).

different.²⁸ In this passage, he emphasises the differences between the arts in terms of their proximity to ‘natural’ imitation: statuary is closest, while painting, verbal description and music proceed away, each increasing the level of artifice required in order to produce intelligible representation. Thus words are comprehensible only to those who speak the language in question, and music, which consists of sounds that have ‘no ideas annexed to them’, is only capable of ‘confused, imperfect’ forms of representation. How music represented or imitated nature in this sense was a key issue for some writers, and one we must confront in order to understand the reception of Purcell’s sonatas. Equally important, however, was the status of music attendant upon this lack of ‘annexed ideas’, since here we find a further context for the promotion of musical artifice as an artistic aim. Here is Dryden, picking up from the point at which we left his preface to the published score of *Dioclesian* above:

Painting is indeed, another sister, being like [music and poetry], an imitation of Nature: but I may venture to say she is a dumb Lady, whose charmes are onely to the eye: a Mute actour upon the stage, who can neither be heard there, nor read afterwards. Besides that she is a single piece; to be seen onely in one place, at once, [...] This is not sayd in disparagement of that noble Art; but onely to give the due precedence, to the others, which are more noble; and which are of nearer kindred to the soule; have less of the matter, & more of the forme; less of the manuell operation, and more of the rationall spirituall part, in our humane nature.²⁹

Dryden is clearly working within the same distinction proposed by Addison some years later, yet with an important qualification: poetry and music are here elevated over painting, as ‘more noble’ and, crucially, more ‘rationall’. We can gain a useful working model for the dichotomy he proposes between painting, which appeals to the senses, and music and poetry, which appeal to the reason, by seeking its possible source in John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* of 1690. Having rejected the conventional opinion that human knowledge resided in a set of innate categories or ‘ideas’, Locke proposed that all of the ‘ideas’ of the mind derived either from sensation or reflection:

§3. First, *Our Senses*, conversant about particular sensible Objects, do convey into the *Mind*, several distinct *Perceptions* of things, according to those various ways, wherein those Objects do affect them: and thus we come by those *Ideas* we have of *Yellow, White, Heat, Cold, Soft, Hard, Bitter, Sweet*, and all those which we call sensible qualities, which when I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they from external Objects convey into the mind what produces there those *Perceptions*.

²⁸ See the discussion on pp. 239-241. On Addison’s relationship with Locke and Dryden, see William H. Youngren, ‘Addison and the Birth of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics’, *Modern Philology*, 79 (1982), 267-83 (pp. 269, 272-6).

²⁹ In *PR*, p. 89.

This great Source, of most of the *Ideas* we have, depending wholly upon our Senses, and derived by them to the Understanding, I call *SENSATION*.

§4. Secondly, the other Fountain, from which Experience furnisheth the Understanding with *Ideas*, is the *Perception of the Operations of our own Minds* within us, as it is employed about the *Ideas* it has got; which Operations, when the Soul comes to reflect on, and consider, do furnish the Understanding with another set of *Ideas*, which could not be had from things without: and such are, *Perception, Thinking, Doubting, Believing, Reasoning, Knowing, Willing*, and all the different actings of our own minds; which we being conscious of, and observing in our selves, do from these receive into our Understandings, as distinct *Ideas*, as we do from Bodies affecting our Senses. This source of *Ideas*, every man has wholly in himself: And though it be not Sense, as having nothing to do with external Objects; yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be call'd internal Sense. But as I call the other *Sensation*, so I call this *REFLECTION*, the *Ideas* it affords being such only, as the Mind gets by reflecting on its own Operations within it self.³⁰

Here, then, is a potential framework for the promotion of musical artifice in and of itself as a poetic goal in Purcell's instrumental music. Reading Dryden's descriptions of painting, poetry and music through Locke's differentiation between sensation and reflection, we find that painting relies principally on the former, whereas poetry and music draw on the latter. Music can be considered a 'just and lively image of human nature' in that its internal organisation resembles just the kind of reflection that Locke describes as the mind 'reflecting on its own Operations within it self'. Moreover, we might suggest, the greater the musical artifice, the more the music can be said to resemble this 'reflection'; conversely, the more overt forms of representation employed in music, which often rely on onomatopoeic or affective devices, belong more to the sensational realm of music, in that their effect relies on the direct imitation of sounds or invocation of affects. Purcell's most artificial music might therefore be thought of as music 'about' music, in the same way that reflection for Locke is the '*Perception of the Operations of our own Minds* within us'.³¹

This somewhat arcane formulation can be demystified to some extent by considering how some of the works analysed earlier on might be thought of as music 'about' music. The exhaustive search for multiple imitative combinations in Fantasia 8, for example, draws on basic processes we might associate with the workings of the mind: it takes an idea and views it from different angles, combines it in different ways, makes judgements about the validity of its conclusions, and attempts to reach new conclusions by combining the results of previous experiments. The two passages I analysed as extended palindromes (the closing section of

³⁰ Locke, *Essay*, I, 77-8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Fantasia 6, and the canzona from 1697 Sonata 10) are perhaps even more convincingly music ‘about’ music, since they take properties of the material in question and manipulate the material in such a way as to commentate upon that material. Similarly, the combination of dance and *fugeing* explored at the head of this chapter is an object study in the ability of music to comment on its own peculiarities: the successful resolution of the tension between the phrasing required by the dance idiom and the process of *fugeing* not only demonstrates Purcell’s subtlety, but undermines the very concept of the dance idiom it adopts. If this music can sound like a dance, then the conventional defining characteristics of the dance must be less important than they appear to be.

Superficially, Dryden’s positioning of music with poetry, ‘of nearer kindred with the Soule’ than painting, resembles the Platonic idea of sympathy between music and the harmony of the soul, resulting in a certain continuity of epistemic vocabulary with discussions of music’s effect on the listener from a century before and earlier. Nevertheless, the couching of this observation within a Lockean distinction between sensation and reflection, and thus in terms of the qualities of human nature and the workings of the conscious mind, situates it squarely within the intellectual climate of the Restoration. We are reminded once more that the word that Purcell chose to describe the Italian sonata, ‘gravity’, itself has strong associations with contemporary theories about how the mind worked; here, then, is the most compelling indication we have thus far of how Purcell’s concept of ‘art mixed with good air’ might have contributed to the quality of ‘gravity’ in his own instrumental works. Such an intense pursuit of artifice might well be thought of not simply as compensation for the absence of words in instrumental music, but as a conscious elevation of the ‘rationall’ qualities of music in order to strengthen its claim to such an exalted position among the arts.

ARTIFICE OR ORNAMENT?

Purcell’s use of musical artifice to make his instrumental music more ‘rationall’ was one manifestation of the potential of contemporary artistic concerns to impact upon musical thought, but it is not the only possible interpretation of contemporary musical poetics. Indeed, most direct commentary on the effects of music on the listener

continued to rely on the common idea of music moving the passions, drawing on the more direct forms of musical mimesis that I suggested were analogous to those found in painting above.

The idea of music ‘arousing the passions’ was nothing new in Restoration music or indeed in any other European tradition, although the increasing sophistication of the models proposed for this did to a large extent depend on new ways of understanding the workings of the ear and their relationship to the listening subject. The simplest model was one of consonance and dissonance conceived of in terms of pleasure and pain: Hobbes, for example, drew on Galileo’s description of the physical properties of the intervals to suggest that the unison, as the simplest ratio (1:1), was the most pleasing due to its equality, and that the successively more complex ratios of the octave, fifth and so on became less pleasing. Dissonant intervals were thus shown to have the most complex ratios and hence to cause displeasure, which in terms of the passions was analogous to physical pain.³² Hobbes continued to describe how musical air could cause ‘pleasure and displeasure of sounds’, a topic that would seem more useful in dealing with actual music:

There is yet *another* Pleasure and Displeasure of Sounds, which consisteth in *Consequence of one Note after another, diversified both by Accent and Measure*; whereof that which pleaseth is called *Air*; but for what Reason Succession in Tone and Measure is more Air than another, I confess I know not; but I conjecture the Reason to be, for that some of them imitate and revive some Passion which otherwise we take no Notice of, and the other not; for *no Air pleaseth but for a time*, no more doth Imitation.³³

This understanding of the properties of air is a useful one, which we will meet again in Roger North’s writings about the nature of music’s relationship to the passions. Hobbes is unable, though, to account for his observation that some air pleases more than others, and he glosses over the reasons for it by referring to the passions in a much more vague sense than his previous recourse to the physical properties of sounds. He is by no means alone in this, however. Thomas Mace, for example, describes the qualities of the various forms of consort music with a flurry of adjectives that suggest a generalised notion of the power of music to influence the passions, without attributing particular sounds to particular affects: consort music represents for him so many ‘*Divine Raptures, Powerfully Captivating all our unruly*

³² Hobbes, *Humane Nature*, pp. 80-81,

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

Faculties, and Affections [...] and disposing us to Solidity, Gravity, and a Good Temper, making us capable of Heavenly, and Divine Influence'.³⁴

By the end of the century a more sophisticated model of music's influence on the passions was beginning to emerge, which was drawn on by early eighteenth-century writers on music. The continuation of the passage from Joseph Addison quoted earlier is a good example. Despite his earlier reticence, he concedes that composers are nevertheless capable of producing 'something like representation in music':

Yet it is certain, that there may be confused, imperfect Notions of this Nature raised in the Imagination by an Artificial Composition of Notes; and we find that great Masters in the Art are able, sometimes, to set their Hearers in the heat and Hurry of a Battel, to overcast their minds with melancholy Scenes and Apprehensions of Deaths and Funerals, or to lull them into pleasing Dreams of Groves and Elisiums.³⁵

The forms of artifice that Addison imagines here are not necessarily the same as the compositional artifice found in Purcell's music; instead, he seems to imply a rather more literal ideal of imitation whereby specific moods are invoked. Such descriptions gave rise in the twentieth century to the rather over-inflated idea of the 'doctrine of the affections', but even if the notion of such a formalised set of principles now seems unlikely, many of its basic tenets were clearly familiar to contemporaries and are important to an understanding of Purcell's sonatas. This is very different, however, from the kind of understanding of Purcell's compositional artifice as a means to impart gravity and increase music's 'rationality' proposed above. Indeed, Addison probably would have had little time for such an idea, since his reading of Locke caused him to propose that the 'pleasures of the imagination', which included appreciation of painting, poetry and music alike, lay midway between sense and understanding, 'not so gross' as the former yet 'not so refined' as the latter.³⁶ This had the advantage of acknowledging that the exigencies of taste were not subject to the logic of reason, yet avoiding the disparaging attitude towards mere sensual pleasure already evident in the writings of Dryden. Like earlier writers, however, Addison offers no clues as to just how music was able to influence the passions, and what it was about the music that made it recall melancholy scenes, funerals or 'Elisiums'.

³⁴ Mace, *Musick's Monument*, p. 234. Mace uses italic type to draw attention to important words and phrases; the length of this passage in italics surely underlines the depth of his enthusiasm for the old consort music. Note, too, Mace's use of the word 'gravity' here.

³⁵ *The Spectator*, III, 559.

³⁶ Youngren, 'Addison and the Birth of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics', p. 281.

Roger North and the Sonata Poetic

Roger North should not be considered an authority on Purcell's sonatas; rather his attitude towards them is reflective of his wider view of music, which itself has much to reveal about why Purcell's sonatas suffered so much in the face of competition from Corelli's and those of his imitators. It is no exaggeration, I would suggest, to view the almost simultaneous appearance of Purcell's and Corelli's sonatas as something of a crossroads in English attitudes towards music. Responding in their different ways to the challenges posed by instrumental music in the intellectual climate of the late seventeenth century sketched above, the two composers' works embody equally valid, but very different poetic attitudes, either of which could have prevailed. Having explored the first of these already, we may recover something of the second from an analysis of North, who was himself an ardent Corellian.

While the connection may not be stated explicitly, North seems to share much of his aesthetic outlook with Addison: he is completely uninterested in the kind of rationality that comes from musical artifice, and continually stresses the relationship between the sensual and affective content of music. Indeed, North's own description of the potential of music to imitate nature (a goal that he shares with all the critics and artists we have encountered thus far) begins to sketch in many of the gaps in the detail of Addison's:

If a painter takes upon him to present the various conditions of adult manhood he will first produce the pourtrait of a person in a garb and posture that speaks him full of thought and design; then of one in action as very buisy about divers important concernes [...; North gives several more stages of the daily activity of contemporary life, concluding with:] one dauncing and capering in the midst of good company. How near these are paralell with the various scenes of musick, now used in our comon Sonnatas a little reflection will shew [...]

Now our composer wants intirely the helps a painter hath, being furnisht onely with sound and time. But yet with these he is inabled to shew caracters as the painter doth, and to make his measures and harmony to resemble thoughtyness of others so much that by a reciprocation of effects, the musick shall excite in the hearers a similar course of thinking, be it serious, executive, grave, in haste, or merry, &c; and by these variety obviat tedium, and at least leave the hearer in such humour as the composer is pleased the musick shall conclude with.³⁷

North, like Addison, conceives of a musical 'description' in which composers are able to imply specific emotions and thoughts, which are felt by the listener through a 'reciprocation of effects'. He thus proposes an almost mechanical model of music's influence on the passions, analogous, perhaps, to the sympathetic vibration of strings.

³⁷ North, p. 116.

More importantly for our purposes, furthermore, he suggests what it is about the music that is able to influence the passions: sound and time.

North's appeal to sound and time as the means of expression available to the musical composer recalls Hobbes's idea of air as the '*Consequence of one Note after another, diversified both by Accent and Measure*' (see above). In other words, I consider North's understanding of music's influence on the passions to be reliant on the principle that musical expression was the product of 'ayre'; as he writes in a later essay, the second *Musicall Grammarian* (1728), 'Is it not therefore to be expected, that a composer should reflect which [...] humours he is to represent, and them to forme the style of his ayre accordingly?'³⁸ Elsewhere, meanwhile, he had observed that the *In nomine* lacked the ability to move the passions (!) on the grounds that its style was lacking in 'ayre':

That which is properly termed Ayre was an intire stranger to this sort of harmony, and the audience might sit with all the tranquillity in the world [...] and not be in the least moved.³⁹

Perhaps even more revealingly, North's essay 'What is Ayre?', and the notes he wrote for its preparation, repeatedly draw the comparison between 'ayre' in music and 'wit' in poetry. In one sense this is a way of accounting for (or, more cynically, glossing over) the rather vague, ineffable nature of 'ayre' as a concept: 'Ayre in Musick, is like witt in poetry, not fixt upon any one quallity, but being taken all-together gives the recommendation'.⁴⁰ Recalling the use of the word 'wit' by Dryden, however, North's analogy takes on a new level of meaning. For Dryden in the preface to *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), wit in poetry was the product of 'some lively and apt description, dress'd in such colours of speech, that it sets before your eyes the absent object, as perfectly and more delightfully than nature'.⁴¹ If 'ayre' and 'wit' were so closely associated in North's mind, it was thus 'ayre' that gave music its power to influence the passions by imitating the 'thoughtlynesse of others'.

In this context North's few but infamous surviving comments on Purcell's sonatas can now be newly interpreted. Having played the sonatas through with the composer, North evidently admired them: he described them as 'very artificiall and

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁴¹ Dryden, *Works*, I, 53.

good musick', and 'his noble set of sonnatas'.⁴² Nevertheless, his comments contained some pointed qualifications. '[Purcell] imitated the Itallian sonnata', North writes, 'and (*bating a little too much of the labour*) outdid them'; his sonatas were '*clog'd with somewhat of an English vein*, for which they are unworthily despised'.⁴³ At the heart of North's comments was a conviction not that fuge was old-fashioned and therefore to be censured (although because much old music used fuge, his attitude towards it was similar), but that the extent of Purcell's artifice was actually obstructive to good air. This was a problem because, as we have seen, he considered air essential to the mimetic capabilities of music; North's formulation of the problem, however, rested on an understanding of the role of fuge and artifice that is almost diametrically opposed to Purcell's:

There have been many industrious treatments of fuges, as reverting, retorting, &c, all which may be seen in Mr Morley, but without any real vertue in the musick, but rather to dull it; for what signifies tricks against sound and free harmony? For that is to flow, and be full, and will not be tyed up to shapes and formallitys. They are like poetry wrote in the shape of an altar, or of an heart or the like, which may contain very good witt, but never the better for the confinement.⁴⁴

North views fuge not as integral to the invention, but as something ornamental and separate from the content of the work, which is principally harmonic. In this context, a creative process, like Purcell's, that started from the contrapuntal materials, would have been incomprehensible; rather than being valued for its degree of artifice, it is left open to charges of complexity and obscurity through over-ornamentation.

The excessive use of ornamentation was one thing of which Restoration artists in all disciplines were wary. It was the occasion of Christopher Wren's single use of a musical analogy to illustrate his ideas, in an uncharacteristically generous assessment of the Gothic architecture of Salisbury cathedral:

The Mouldings are decently Mixed with large planes, without an affectation of filling every corner with ornaments, which (unlesse they are admirably good) glut the eye, as much in Music too much division cloyes the eare.⁴⁵

Here, of course, the issue of ornament is primarily related to the desire for clarity. A further concern was the need for decorum or propriety, as Dryden states in the *Parallel*:

⁴² *PR*, p. 35

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 35 (my emphasis) and p. 60 above.

⁴⁴ North, p. 139.

⁴⁵ Soo, *Wren's 'Tracts'*, p. 63.

As in the composition of a picture the painter is to take care that nothing enter into it which is not proper or convenient to the subject, so likewise is the poet to reject all incidents which are foreign to his poem, and are naturally no parts of it [...] A painter must reject all trifling ornaments; so must a poet refuse all tedious and unnecessary descriptions. A robe which is too heavy is less an ornament than a burthen. [...]

Since[, however,] there must be ornaments both in painting and in poetry, if they are not necessary, at least they must be decent; that is, in their due place, and but moderately used. The painter is not to take so much pains about the drapery, as about the face, where the principal resemblance lies; neither is the poet, who is working up a passion, to make similes, which will certainly make it languish.⁴⁶

In this context it is easy to see how, when imitation is associated with ornament, Purcell's densely fugal textures could be construed as detrimental to the 'harmony', the clear, tonally directed 'tonal models' that underlay the Italian music to which the public had become accustomed. Purcell had arguably failed, in his own terms, to maintain an appropriate balance between the 'great deal of art mixed with good air', which he cited as 'the perfection of a master' in 'The Art of Descant'.⁴⁷ His sonatas perhaps also suffered from the increasingly public, listener-oriented performance of chamber music in the 1680s and '90s. North makes a clear distinction between the characteristics of performers' music and that for the enjoyment of an audience,⁴⁸ and if we turn Wren's earlier musical analogy on its head, we can read into his writings a strong awareness of the position of the observer, which might apply equally to the listener:

Things seen near at hand may have small and many Members, be well furnished with Ornaments, and may lie flatter; on the contrary, all this Care is ridiculous at great Distances; there bulky Members, and full Projectures casting quick shadows, are commendable: small ornaments at too great distance, serve only to confound the Symmetry, and to take away the Lustre of the Object, by darkening it with many little Shadows.⁴⁹

By the same token, music written with the enjoyment of the performer in mind might well employ complex contrapuntal textures, but in the context of music performed before an audience, such detail is not only lost, but takes away from the effectiveness of the whole.

For North, then, fugue was an ornament to the underlying music, and as such was in danger of obscuring the 'ayre' and thereby inhibiting the ability of music to influence the passions. He and his contemporaries recognised the Italian sonata, and especially those of Corelli, as the ideal representation of the fundamental importance

⁴⁶ Dryden, 'Parallel', pp. 139-40.

⁴⁷ *AD*, p. 125.

⁴⁸ In North, p. 257-61.

⁴⁹ In Soo, *Wren's 'Tracts'*, pp. 155.

of good ayre. North's ideas were indeed very similar to those of Charles Avison in his *Essay on Musical Expression* (1750). Avison understood the quality of musical expression to reside in the balance between air (which by now can be understood simply as a synonym for 'melody') and harmony, and devoted much attention to 'the too close attachment to harmony, and neglect of air'. On the subject of fugue and other musical artifice, he noted that

The learned contrapuntist may exercise his talent in many wonderful contrivances, as in fugues and canons of various subjects and parts, &c. But, where the master is thus severely intent in shewing his art, he may, indeed, amuse the understanding, and amaze the eye, but can never touch the heart, or delight the ear.⁵⁰

Clearly this draws on the same attitude we saw in North, now expressed even more forcefully and suggesting a general distaste for anything over-intellectualised in music. The use of the word 'learned' appears to be faintly pejorative, while the very ability of artificial music to appeal to the 'rationall' part of the mind that was so important to Dryden is no longer to be applauded: instead, Avison caricatures it as the mere 'amusing' of the understanding. One is reminded of Scheibe's trenchant criticism of J. S. Bach in the late 1730s, in which he described the composer's music as 'turgid'.⁵¹ It is against this background that we must understand the almost complete disappearance of Purcell's sonatas in the early eighteenth century. Indeed, as I showed in Chapter 2, much modern analysis still relies on similar principles to those held by North and his successors about the nature of fugal artifice; although slower to dismiss it as over-intellectual or decadent, commentators like Martin Adams still understand imitation as essentially a 'foreground' phenomenon, designed to impart 'motivic unity' to an otherwise disparate musical surface.

Purcell's 'Poetics of Artifice' and the creative process

North's view of Purcell's sonatas based on this conception of fugue as ornament is, nonetheless, fundamentally flawed. As we have seen, musical artifice need not necessarily be understood as ornament; it can also be part of the mimetic content of the music, and is instrumental in the elevation of its status to that of a 'rationall' art form. I do not believe Purcell would have accepted that his musical artifice was

⁵⁰ Charles Avison, *An Essay on Musical Expression*, 3rd edn (London: L. Davis, 1775), p. 39.

⁵¹ See Boyd, *Bach*, pp. 160-61.

obstructive to good air – his own ideal, in fact, advocated a judicious mixture of the two – nor that it inhibited the capacity of his compositions to move the hearer.

It would be very difficult, however, to substantiate this claim on the basis of the evidence we have encountered thus far. Despite the convincing nature of the poetics of artifice outlined in connection with Dryden and Purcell earlier on, the fact remains that North's more literal understanding of the nature of musical mimesis seems equally applicable to Purcell. In some ways, Purcell's sonatas do everything North wanted them to (hence his admiration of them, despite their 'faults'). It is quite possible to go through the two sets of sonatas identifying the kinds of passions ('serious, executive, grave, in haste, or merry, &c.'), or even the daily activities (contemplation, business, conversation, dancing, rest) that North invokes in the description we met above of how the Italian sonata resembles the art of painting. Recognising that such characteristics can be heard in the music, and that they are represented through the very means of 'ayre' and metre that North identifies as the tools of the composer in imitating the passions, it would seem dishonest to ignore the far greater preponderance of artificial and fugal devices in Purcell's sonatas when compared with Italian examples. Could North have been justified in his verdict that the sonatas were 'clog'd with somewhat of an English vein'?

Of course, the question is in a sense a foolish one, since North was entitled to hold whatever opinion about Purcell's sonatas he chose. Equally, though, North was as aware as many later commentators of the transient nature of musical taste, and we are no more bound to agree with his opinions today than he felt compelled to agree with the enthusiasm of previous generations for the *In nomine*. With the benefit of three centuries of hindsight, it is clear that North's understanding of the poetics of music was in some ways radically different from Purcell's. The key to understanding the difference between the two lies not in their attitudes towards music as an imitation of nature, which after all was a goal shared by nearly all artists of whatever discipline, but in their attitude towards the role of musical artifice in the creative process.

One of the most overtly artificial movements in the sonatas is the first movement of 1683 Sonata 6, a movement that has attracted much attention, if little detailed analysis, from commentators. This movement is an extreme example of what Purcell would have described as fugeing *per augmentation*, in which he combines a single point in canon with simultaneous augmentation and diminution (Ex. 5.5).

Ex. 5.5. 1683 Sonata 6/i: first platform.



The process by which Purcell must have arrived at such a canon, according to the techniques he used in the pieces examined in the foregoing chapters, firmly places his technique of *fugeing* not as an ornamental phenomenon as North would have it, but as the very heart of his compositional activity. The difference between the two can be appreciated by understanding Purcell's creative process in the context of contemporary understandings of the creative process, such as the following passage from the preface to Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* (1667):

The first happiness of the Poet's imagination is properly Invention, or finding of the thought; the second is Fancy, or the variation, deriving or moulding of the thought, as the judgement represents it proper to the subject; the third is Elocution, or the Art of clothing and adorning that thought so found and varied, in apt, significant and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the Invention, the fertility in the Fancy, and the accuracy in the Expression.⁵²

Dryden's threefold division of the creative process is familiar from classical treatises on rhetoric and oratory, from which his ideas almost certainly derived.⁵³ Its particular interest here, however, is that it furnishes a basic division of the stages of poetic (and, by analogy, musical) composition, against which we might compare Purcell's piece and the ideas of North. To this end, I examine 1683 Sonata 6/i under three successive headings corresponding to Dryden's divisions: invention, fancy, and elocution.

i. Invention

Dryden's description of invention ('the finding of the thought') would seem to be the simplest, yet in terms of an analysis of Purcell's sonata movement it soon becomes problematic: just what is the 'thought' behind this music? The most obvious answer is that this 'thought' is the canonic subject of Purcell's movement. Contemporary

⁵² Dryden, *Works*, I, 53.

⁵³ See, for example, the fivefold division proposed by Cicero in *De Inventione*. Dryden's three stages are similar to the first three of these (*inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*); the remaining two (*memoria*, *pronuntiatio*) concern the delivery of an oration and not its composition. Cicero, *De Inventione*, *de Optimo genere oratorum*, *Topica*, trans. H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1949), p. 9. Laurence Dreyfus examines the importance of such models in eighteenth-century German musical treatises in *Patterns of Invention*, p. 3.

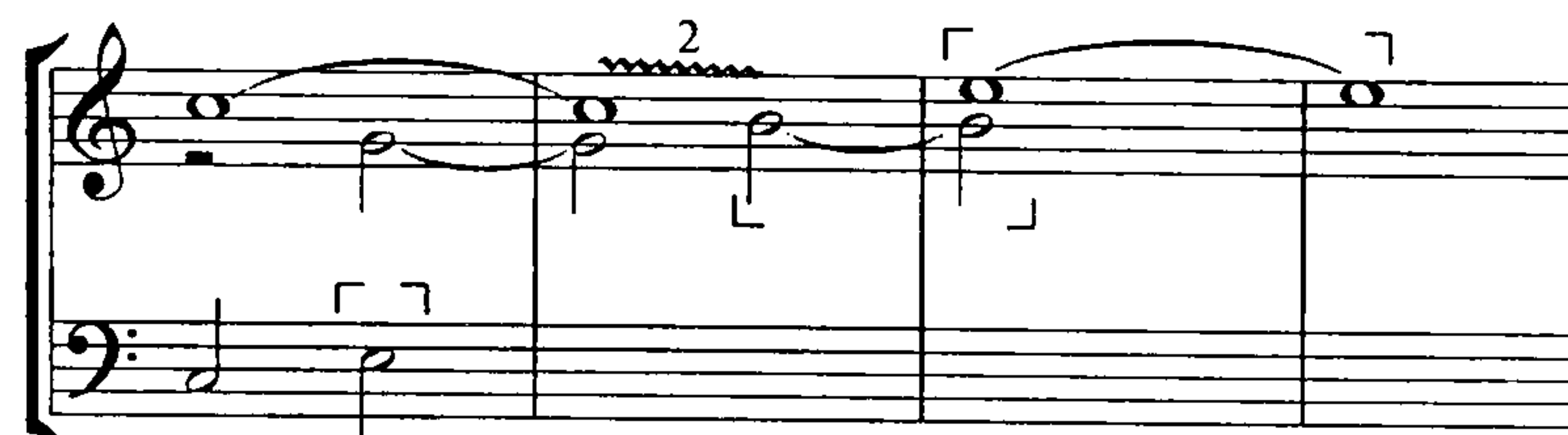
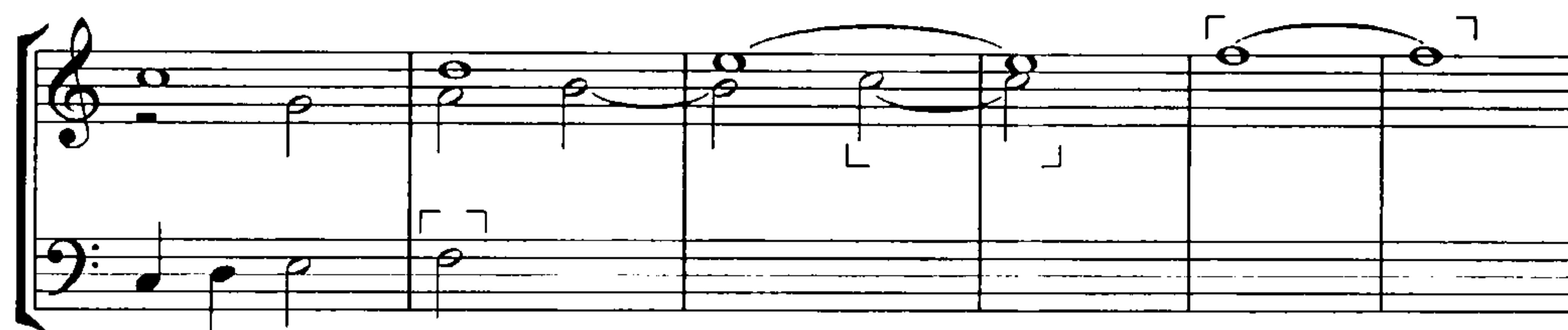
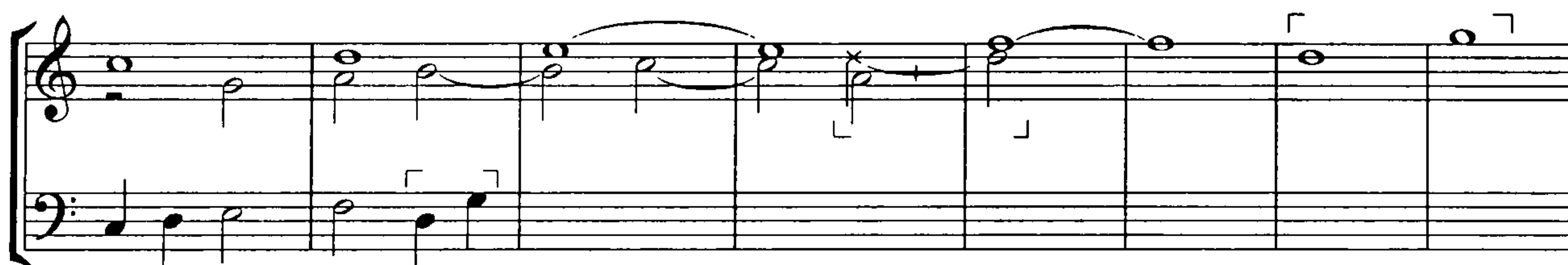
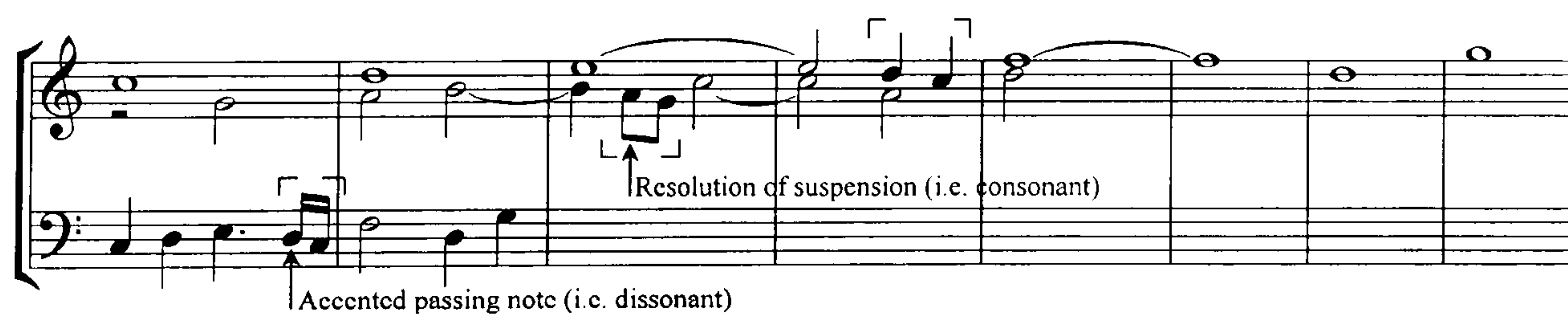
theorists from Morley's time up to Simpson and Purcell consistently state that the first stage in writing a fugal work is to take a point consisting of several notes, which will be the subject of the fugue. As so often in Purcell's music, however, in this case it seems there must be more to the invention than the apparently arbitrary or fortuitous selection of a point and its subsequent combination in as many contrapuntal guises as he was able to discover: otherwise he would have had to have tried and discarded innumerable points before finding one with the potential to combine with itself at two simultaneous levels of augmentation, let alone provide the dazzling array of further canons and imitative entries in the remainder of 1683 Sonata 6/i.

For this reason it is much more productive to consider the 'thought' Dryden describes as the beginning of the creative process not as an actual musical fragment, but as the conceit behind the movement: the idea of composing a 'canon by twofold augmentation'. The difficulties of composing such a thing thus become less daunting, since the material with which to create the canon can be developed step by step, working perhaps one or two notes at a time and in all voices concurrently, in order that the contrapuntal implications of each decision can be grasped immediately. This is exactly the process described by Christopher Simpson for the composition of Canon in his *Compendium*.⁵⁴

It is quite possible to reconstruct the process by which Purcell would have arrived at his 'canon by twofold augmentation' in 1683 Sonata 6/i. In Ex. 5.6 the canon is built up by stages beginning from the initial selection of pitches and levels of augmentation, such that an addition or alteration to one part is replicated in each of the two remaining parts (indicated in square brackets). Purcell's successive additions to the subject demanded alterations to the existing material (as in b-c) or precluded particular continuations that would have been otherwise desirable (e). Furthermore, the additional complication of the two levels of augmentation (not discussed by Simpson) meant that some notes had to serve equally well in different functional contexts (f).

Assuming one accepts the premise that this passage must have been composed in such a way, the opening of Sonata 6 is a valuable piece of evidence for the derivation of contrapuntal materials from the very process of contriving counterpoint. Purcell's

⁵⁴ Simpson, pp. 120-21, 124-5.

Ex. 5.6. Three-part canon in 1683 Sonata 6/i: hypothetical reconstruction of composition.**(a) Opening pitches and relative note values.****(b) Introduction of third in bass causes unprepared minor second between violins.****(c) Corrected by insertion of passing note.****(d) Continuation of bass in sixths with violin I:****(e) Continuation of rising scale prohibited in violin II by violin I; interpolation of falling third.****(f) Resolution of implied suspension in violin II, b. 3:****(g) Addition of passing notes (final form of canon):**

artifice in this passage is simply not reducible to ornament in the sense that North understands it, since without the artifice there would be no music. By contrast, North's idea of fugue might be compared with Christopher Wintle's notion of 'tonal models' in Corelli's sonatas (see Chapter 4). For North, the 'thought' of the piece was the 'ayre', which consisted of the melody together with its harmonic implications. As Wintle shows, Corelli's points were designed to elucidate the underlying harmony, and thus stood in a constant relationship to it; as such, the melodic point itself was essentially ornamental, and even expendable, if North's remarks are to be taken seriously.

ii. Fancy

Although 1683 Sonata 6/i is an extreme case, Purcell derived the properties of his material from specific compositional conceits in many of the works analysed in Chapters 3 and 4. Furthermore, even in cases where such *fugeing* did not itself influence the melodic character of a work, it still did not constitute ornamentation. Instead, it belonged to the second stage of Dryden's creative process: the 'variation, deriving or moulding of the thought, as the judgement represents it proper to the subject'. This is a good description of the process of 'research' into the imitative properties of materials that I have observed in so many of Purcell's fantasias and sonatas, a process that is equally obvious in the present movement.

Having worked out the opening canon as part of the process of invention, Purcell began the 'variation' of this material by attempting further complexes involving simultaneous augmentation at two different levels. As one might expect, this was not possible without considerable alterations to the material, but as in other chamber works, Purcell still made use of the resulting counterpoint. One such passage appears in bars 19 to 28, and a more successful attempt in bars 30-38 (Ex. 5.7). Purcell also

Ex. 5.7. Sonata 6/i, bb. 31-38.



must have noticed, or even had in mind throughout the process of ‘invention’, that the subject’s intervals made it suitable for use in stretto *fuga*, since he devoted a considerable portion of the movement to attempted combinations of this stretto *fuga* with a further entry in augmentation. The most successful of these appear in Ex. 5.8, including the one combination that required no amendments to the material at all (d).

Such an understanding of Purcell’s research into the further imitative possibilities of his material accords well with Dryden’s principle of ‘fancy’. In particular, it resonates strongly with Dryden’s qualification that this variation takes place ‘as the

Ex. 5.8. Stretto *fuga* in 1683 Sonata 6/i.

(a) Properties of material.



(b) Unsuccessful combination demanding alterations to both parts of stretto *fuga*.



(c) Further unsuccessful combination; one part of stretto *fuga* left in tact.



(d) Successful combination of stretto *fuga* and augmented entry.



judgement represents it proper to the subject'. Purcell attempted to find new combinations of his point with itself (fancy), but was restrained by the principles of counterpoint in cases where particular combinations were not possible to sustain (judgement). Further 'judgement' facilitated the alteration of parts in order to make these combinations work, or, if this was not possible, the salvage of shorter passages derived from attempted imitative complexes for use elsewhere. The exercise of 'fancy' restrained by the judgement of the poet is thus closely analogous to Purcell's principle of 'a great deal of art, mixed with good air'. Once again, it reinforces the position of musical artifice not as ornament, but as the very substance of the music.

iii. Elocution

This was the final stage in Dryden's division of the creative process, 'the Art of clothing and adorning that thought so found and varied, in apt, significant and sounding words'. Since most of the material for Purcell's movement came from his imitative and canonic experiments, there was in a sense very little 'clothing and adorning' to be done. Nevertheless, Purcell was obliged to fill in some parts with more functional notes, unrelated to the subject. Such filling occurred in the bass part in bars 3-12, for example, necessitated by the length of the augmented entry in the first violin. Most interesting, however, is the extent to which in this movement the music relies on non-imitative material to create cadences. The first true modulation of the piece, for example, towards the cadence on the fifth degree (bb. 17-18, Ex. 5.9), occurs after the imitative content of the phrase is completed and incorporates non-thematic, or at best only loosely related material. Examples 5.8b and c above, which show only the imitative content of this phrase, give little clue as to this harmonic goal – indeed, if anything it implies a move towards F major and not the cadence on the fifth that arrives in bar 17.

The reason this is so remarkable is that the very harmonic planning of the movement seems to belong to the domain of ornament, designed to 'clothe' the

Ex. 5.9. Sonata 6/i, bb. 11-18.



canonic inventions in an ‘apt’ and ‘[well-] sounding’ harmonic framework. Such an extreme example seems to conflict with the mutual inclusivity of harmony and *fugeing* observed in other works, but is really only one step beyond the addition of stock cadential voice-leading patterns in works like Fantasia 8 and 1683 Sonata 1/i.

In summary, then, an analysis of this movement following the broad terms of Dryden’s description of the creative process reveals the problems of North’s understanding of fugue when applied to Purcell’s music. By understanding his remarks about the sonatas in this context, we can attribute the characteristics he describes not to a pervading conservatism (or even a failure of technique) on the part of Purcell, but to the aesthetic standards of a later age. Having done so, we are left free to understand better the characteristics of Purcell’s music on its own terms, and to make our own aesthetic judgements based on this understanding and on the standards of our own day, just as North did in the early eighteenth century.

PURCELL’S MUSIC AND THE ‘PARADOX OF RATIONALISM’

Both of the understandings of musical poetics proposed in this chapter draw on the language and epistemology of contemporary empiricism, and in particular, John Locke, to understand the expressive qualities of music. The first, which I associate with Purcell himself, recognises music as a ‘rationall’ art through its affinity with the workings of the mind, and positively encourages musical artifice as a means of increasing this rationality. By appealing explicitly to the notion of music as a ‘rationall’ art, Dryden compensated for the imperfection of music’s ability to represent and imitate natural objects and events in the way that the visual arts could. Music would be judged by the extent to which it took its sensual materials and used them to create an artificial and rational musical object, in the same way that the reason examined and organised the ideas gained through sensual experience, and even perceived its own consciousness of these processes, according to Locke’s formulation of the concept of ‘reflection’.

According to the second poetic system, meanwhile, music is understood to influence the passions (an idea that I believe Purcell would also have acknowledged), and musical artifice is considered as ornamental, an unnatural encumbrance to the ‘ayre’ and detrimental to the expressive capabilities of the music (to which I believe

Purcell would have strongly objected). This latter poetic system I have identified with the writings of Roger North, and further suggested that it is reflective of Joseph Addison's understanding of the 'pleasures of the imagination' as residing between the extremes of sense and reason that Locke recognises as the sources of all human perception. According to this model, in the words of Donald F. Bond, 'Phantasms [i.e. the products of artistic mimesis] were no longer evaluated by an ideal truth, but by the truth or falsehood of the sensations which brought them into existence'; hence North's prejudice against fugue on the grounds that it concealed the 'true ayre' of the music.⁵⁵

Despite the differences between these two models, their common empiricist basis at least furnished knowable (though not objective) criteria according to which one could assess the character and effects of music. For those who sympathised with Descartes's rationalist philosophy, however, such phenomena were far more problematic.⁵⁶ Descartes held that the only certain truths were innate in the mind of the conscious human being, and that all other useful knowledge could be arrived at by deduction from these first principles. He also harboured a strong distrust of the senses, which could deceive the mind, and which perceived things differently according to one's mood or environmental conditions; it followed that all knowledge arrived at by internal reasoning was inherently superior to that gained by the senses. This had important consequences for the understanding of poetic and aesthetic concepts like beauty and expression, which could only be conceived by the senses in the first instance: Descartes himself refused to accept the notion that works of art could be compared to one another or judged on any other basis than the degree to which they gave pleasure to a particular individual at a particular time. Not only was beauty a matter of taste, but taste itself was subject to the imperfections of the senses, with the result that art in general, and music in particular, could not be subject to any consistent criteria of beauty or excellence.

According to Charles Dill, who describes this problem as the 'Paradox of Rationalism', critics of music in eighteenth-century France sought to apply the

⁵⁵ Donald F. Bond, 'The Neo-Classical Psychology of the Imagination', *English Literary History*, 4 (1937), 245-64 (p. 264).

⁵⁶ Descartes's writings were well known in England during the seventeenth century; see S. P. Lamprecht, 'The Role of Descartes in Seventeenth-Century England', *Studies in the History of Ideas*, 3 (1935), 179-240 (pp. 179-240). Contemporary English translations of, and commentaries upon the works of Descartes and his followers occupy ten volumes in the recent edition edited by Daniel Garber and Roger Ariew, *Descartes in Seventeenth-Century England* (Bristol: Thoemmes, 2002).

general principles of rationalism to the understanding of music, despite the fact that Descartes persistently refused to admit the potential of a rational conception of musical beauty.⁵⁷ This refusal is demonstrated by the remnants of correspondence between Descartes and Mersenne in the mid-seventeenth century, and gives rise in the eighteenth century, according to Dill, to an overwhelming preoccupation in French literature on musical beauty with the scientific properties of sound, in an effort to furnish the kind of ‘solid, tenable information’ that would account satisfactorily for beauty in music along rationalistic lines.⁵⁸

This kind of problem is the background to a third attitude towards music in England around the turn of the eighteenth century, which we have yet to encounter. Indeed, in a sense, both the Dryden/Purcell and the Addison/North poetic systems can be understood to use the critical apparatus of empiricism as a defence against the Cartesian denial of any prospect of a rational aesthetics. This third musical poetic does not draw on the empirical model in the same way, and as a result, the power of music to ‘move’ the listener to particular moods and emotions takes on an almost threatening dimension. The following passage, from Jeremy Collier’s *Essay on Musick*, is a case in point:

the Force of *Musick* is more wonderful than the Conveyance, especially of a consort. It strangely awakens the Mind. It infuses an unexpected Vigour. It makes the Impression agreeable and sprightly, and seems to furnish a new Capacity, as well as a new Opportunity of Satisfaction. It raises and falls and Counterchanges the Passions at an unaccountable rate. It changes and transports, ruffles and becalms, and almost governs with an Arbitrary Authority, and there is hardly any Constitution so heavy, or any Reason so well fortified as to be absolute proof against it.⁵⁹

Collier was a clergyman and writer on a variety of subjects, who had opposed the deposition of James II in 1688 and is now best known for his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* of 1698. His ‘Essay on Musick’ begins with a long survey of the evidence for the power of music in classical mythology, and ends with a diatribe against the modern misuse of these powers to licentious and immoral ends; clearly here is no impartial observer. Nevertheless, the remarkable figurative descriptions of musical expression in the quoted passage, and

⁵⁷ Charles Dill, ‘Music, Beauty, and the Paradox of Rationalism’, in *French Musical Thought, 1600-1800*, ed. Georgina Cowart (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989), pp. 197-210 p. 197.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁵⁹ Jeremy Collier, ‘Essay on Musick’, in *Essays upon Several Moral Subjects in two parts* (London: Printed by R. Sare and H. Hindmarsh, 1697), II, 20-21.

the particular cultural phenomena on which they draw, show just how powerful this aspect of musical experience was, irrespective of Collier's ideological aims.

Two particular references in Collier's passage stand out. Firstly, there is the reference to the 'force' of music. Once again, music is understood in a strongly physical sense: when a force is exerted on a body, that body is set in motion, and as we have seen, it was motion that inspired the passions. We might even read Collier's reference in the light of Newton's laws of motion, published for the first time in his *Principia Mathematica* (1687). According to Newton's first law, a body continues in its current state until the application of some new force. The power of music to 'raise and fall and counterchange the passions' is therefore understood metaphorically here as an exertion of forces in different directions on a passive body (the listening subject). This is why music becomes threatening for Collier: he emphasises the coercive aspect of musical experience, leading directly into his observation that music 'almost governs with an Arbitrary Authority'.

This statement, Collier's second important metaphor, draws on one of the most potent concepts in seventeenth-century English political thought. It was perceived arbitrary rule that was one of the main factors in the fermentation of civil war and ultimately in the execution of Charles I; later, both the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 represented attempts to avoid further bloodshed by ensuring that the ruling power was seen to be legitimate.⁶⁰ By applying the notion of arbitrary authority to the action of music on the listener's consciousness, Collier was effectively reversing the common early modern trope of the 'body politic', whereby the human body is used as a metaphor for the nation-state.⁶¹ Turning this on its head, Collier is able to describe the effects of music on the listener in terms of a well known concept of political rule.

We can see just how powerful Collier perceived music to be by reading this passage in conjunction with contemporary descriptions of arbitrary rule. John Locke described such regimes as those that forced their subjects 'to obey at pleasure the exorbitant and unlimited decrees of their sudden thoughts, or unrestrained, and till that

⁶⁰ See Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 31-3, 60-62.

⁶¹ The most famous example of the application of this metaphor is of course Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* [1660], ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: OUP, 1998).

moment unknown wills, without having any measures set down which may guide and justify their actions'.⁶² For Collier, then, the effect of music is coercive, unpredictable, capricious and unaccountable. While it is often pleasurable or beneficial, it is the element of coercion that makes it dangerous:

Though the Entertainments of Musick are very Engaging; though they make a great Discovery of the Soul; and shew it capable of strange Diversities of Pleasure: Yet to have our Passions lye at the Mercy of a little Minstrelsy; to be Fiddled out of our Reason and Sobriety; to have our Courage depend on a *Drum*, or our Devotions on an *Organ*, is a sign we are not so great as we might be. If we were proof against the charming of Sounds; or could we have the Satisfaction without the Danger, or raise our Minds to what Pitch we pleas'd by the Strength of *Thinking*, it would be a nobler Instance of Power and Perfection.⁶³

In this last passage we get a clear indication of the importance of rationalism to Collier's understanding of music. The power and unpredictability of music is associated with a purely sensual pleasure ('the charming of sounds'), and identified as a sign of the weakness of the human passions. Collier's idea of a stronger constitution is one capable of controlling the passions 'by the Strength of *Thinking*'.

Collier's arguments assume even greater importance for the present study in the context of their appropriation by Arthur Bedford for use in his 1711 *The Great Abuse of Musick*. Like Collier, Bedford was a clergyman who wrote and published on the moral and spiritual health of his nation, though his *Great Abuse of Musick* places more emphasis on the potential nobility of music when used correctly. Bedford was also keen to observe the power of music in its modern practice, rather than in abstract terms as Collier had done (albeit with the aid of his Classical mythology). Thus when he quotes Collier, verbatim, from the passage given above on page 254, he adds immediately

There are some swift *Notes* and *Leaps* in a *Sonata*, especially in the upper Part, which shall almost command a Laughter. There are also slow Movements, with Variety of *Discords*, which shall bring down the Mind again into a pleasing *Melancholy*, and all this shall happen frequently in the playing over of the same *Tune*.⁶⁴

Bedford immediately illustrates the 'arbitrary' nature of music with an example from the modern sonata: what could be more unaccountable or unpredictable than that musical sounds, which 'have no Ideas annexed to them', should nevertheless

⁶² John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* [1690], ed. C. B. McPherson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980), p. 79.

⁶³ Collier, 'Essay on Musick', pp. 24-5.

⁶⁴ Arthur Bedford, *The Great Abuse of Musick* (London: John Wyatt, 1711), p. 169.

‘command a Laughter’ in the listener? Furthermore, even familiarity does not diminish the power of the notes to influence the passions.

Much more than Collier, who described it as ‘little better than an *Alehouse-Crowds*’, Bedford seems convinced of the potential of modern music to aspire to the achievements of the ancients. In Chapter 9 he describes ‘The Corruption of Modern Musick by Mean Composures’,⁶⁵ chief among which are the neglect of techniques of dissonance and the artifice of fugal composition. Bedford apparently sees compositional artifice as a kind of counterbalance to the licentiousness of music and its ‘arbitrary’ effect on the listener. It is up to the composer to maintain the proper balance:

Our *Sonatas* are reckon’d the greatest Perfection of *Instrumental Musick*, wherein the *Composer* useth all the skill which *Art* and *Fancy* can invent, to affect the *Passions*.⁶⁶

Ultimately he has arrived, though by a different route, at the same balance of nature and artifice as we observed in connection with Dryden’s and Purcell’s more empirical view of the poetics of music. Not surprisingly, Bedford was an ardent Purcellian, noting in respect to the proper employment of dissonance that ‘The *Italian Compositions* (especially their *Sonatas*) is very eminent in this Respect. From thence Mr. *Purcel* seems to have taken this his *Master-piece*, in which he hath since been inimitable’.⁶⁷

Earlier on I situated Purcell’s pursuit of artificial compositional techniques in the context of the position of music as a ‘rationall’ art, as a way of providing intramusical coherence in the absence of a text, and as a way of increasing mimetic content through resemblance to the workings of the mind. Bedford adds to this the insight that the ‘arbitrary’ nature of musical influence on the passions makes this pursuit of artifice all the more crucial to the success and artistic status of the work produced: compositional artifice becomes a means by which to control the representation of the passions. Ultimately, the issues of how music can have mimetic content and how purely instrumental music can be composed and structured become one and the same thing, in accordance with Dryden’s conception of music, like poetry, as a ‘rationall’ art. Successful imitation of human nature, the aim of all art, is achieved only through the pursuit of high artifice.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

CONCLUSION

The attitudes of early commentators reveal a reception of Purcell's instrumental music in marked contrast to his widespread veneration as a vocal composer. While some, like Arthur Bedford, admired the artifice of his sonatas, North's comment about their 'English vein' is far more representative of wider opinions: unable to benefit from the degree of shelter afforded his vocal works by their use of the English language, Purcell's instrumental compositions receded, much earlier than did his works for the stage, into the shadows of the encroaching Italian style. By the late eighteenth century these were works that seemed almost irredeemably outmoded to Burney and Hawkins, despite the latter's admiration for the 'Golden' sonata.

From today's perspective, contemporary intellectual fashions made it inevitable that Purcell's music was to be widely misunderstood; if not explicitly in extant written sources, then at least on the evidence of surviving copies, and in accounts of the far more numerous performances of Italian instrumental music in the early eighteenth century. Paradoxically, however, it is only by recovering this adverse critical context that we can break through the encrusted layers of reception so as to appreciate the extraordinary musical achievements of Purcell's chamber music for strings. Against the background of late seventeenth-century musical fashions, Purcell's insistence on the merits of high contrapuntal artifice is not conservative but, rather, revolutionary, even subversive.

The superficial musical tastes of Charles II and his court in the early 1680s may seem an unlikely inspiration for the composition of these, Purcell's most sophisticated contrapuntal works. For a young composer who was not only attracted to musical artifice, but also possessed the ability to gird it with music of such intense expressive power, however, it may have been just the right environment to spark his interest. Against the background of Charles's documented antipathy towards 'Grave & Solemn' music, Purcell's appeal to 'seriousness and gravity' in the preface to his 1683 sonatas – not to mention the time and care he had devoted to the composition of his music for viol consort three years earlier – seems nothing less than deliberate

provocation: a statement of his intention to pursue a manner of composition that was manifestly different from his expected contribution as court composer for the violins.¹

By the first decades of the eighteenth century, it was not superficiality but the suave fluency of Italian styles that made Purcell's works seem incongruous. For those, like North, accustomed to the strongly directed tonality of Corelli and his successors, Purcell's earlier praise of the Italian sonata was an embarrassing reminder of the provincial character of native English music. North, and later, Sir John Hawkins, found it necessary to account for Purcell's apparent failure to assimilate Corelli's manner by pointing to the much earlier Italian repertoire with which Purcell was familiar, an issue that has resurfaced periodically ever since.

Throughout the last three hundred years of Purcellian literature, these two contexts have shaped the opinions and theories of successive commentators on the composer's instrumental music, from attempts to account for Purcell's interest in the otherwise obsolete consort of viols, through the problems of his Italian influences, to the notion of his sublimation of these two interests to produce his own individual style. Underlying all of these different issues is a remarkable continuity of approach. Roger North's understanding of the sonata, for example, with its emphasis on affective content and relegation of fugal technique to the status of mere ornament, relies on exactly the same hierarchical distinction between (melodic) surface and (harmonic) substance that underpins the identification of imitation with 'motivic economy' and organic unity in the modern analytical commentary of Michael Tilmouth and Martin Adams.

The analysis of Purcell's music through compositional, and particularly fugal, technique demands a reconsideration of some of these fundamental assumptions. The passive model of influence implied by the common search for Purcell's Italian models is replaced with an appreciation of his active engagement with different idioms. Purcell does not merely adopt the Italian sonata style, he appropriates elements of its language, incorporating them into his own fugal approach in a highly idiosyncratic way. The same is true of his relationship to the English consort tradition. Analysis of how this takes place can thus reveal much about Purcell's compositional priorities,

¹ A position to which Purcell had acceded in 1677, on the death of Matthew Locke. Even Purcell's music that was suitable for the court violins contained examples of extreme compositional artifice; see, for example, Peter Holman, 'Compositional Choices in Henry Purcell's *Three Parts upon a ground*', *EM*, 29 (2001), 250-61, *passim*.

and in particular focus attention on his promotion of contrapuntal techniques not as a sign of some deeply entrenched conservatism of personality, but as a commitment to artifice *per se* as a criterion of musical worth, a mark of ‘the Perfection of a master’.

The assertion of the centrality of fugal artifice in Purcell’s compositional technique is far more than a simple recasting of the conventional notion of Purcell’s conservatism. The two perspectives may be compatible according to a comparatively weak formulation of the idea of conservatism – ‘interest in old styles’ – but even this is to identify the outward signs, rather than the causes of Purcell’s rebellion against the ‘levity and balladry’ of music in the early 1680s. Such a reconciliation not only encourages exactly the kind of facile analytical equation of counterpoint with conservatism that I have criticised, but also misrepresents the kind of historicist *stile antico* that Robert Shay and Martin Adams have observed in some of Purcell’s music.

If there is one aspect of this historicised view of Purcell’s interest in the techniques of formal counterpoint that is redeemable, however, it is its emphasis on the singularity of Purcell’s ‘poetics of artifice’ in the context of the surrounding musical culture. It was precisely because his works embodied such characteristics that they were received with such diffidence, and ultimately eclipsed so soon by the Italian repertoire. The result is a picture of Purcell’s consort music and sonatas as esoteric, even elitist.

According to an empiricist understanding of the nature of musical expression, Purcell’s music was indeed more ‘rationall’, and ‘of nearer kindred to the soule’ than other contemporary styles. The obvious question, therefore, is to ask just *whose* ‘soul’ its qualities resembled. Perhaps Purcell undermined his very intention to reinstate the prestige attached to musical artifice in earlier generations, by overstressing the ability of his audiences and even fellow musicians to comprehend his intricate and systematic approach to *fugeing*. If it were not for his unquestioned ability to compose in a more accessible style in other genres, without compromising his overall artistic standards, this rather pessimistic view of Purcell’s sensitivity to the musical environment in which he worked would be basically convincing. As it is, however it seems more appropriate to point to the great changes in the social circumstances of chamber music performance that occurred during Purcell’s lifetime: the levels of imitative complexity that were appropriate to music performed for the pleasure of the participants became untenable in the context of an increasingly public, concert driven

environment in which large audiences paid to hear music performed. Furthermore, the replacement of gentleman amateur performers with professional musicians in these concerts encouraged the selection of more virtuosic repertoire, or music that could be easily subjected to complex divisions, neither of which categories could be said to apply to Purcell's fantasias or sonatas.

The principal contributions of the present study are threefold. In the first place, it re-examines the reception of Purcell's music in general, and his chamber music in particular, highlighting those aspects of his musical and cultural importance that have contributed to the modern received understanding of the composer; namely his pre-eminence amongst native English composers and his gift for vocal composition, and the related issue of his importance as a setter of English words. Secondly, it establishes an analytical approach that does not rely on anachronistic assumptions and formalised procedures based on other, later repertoires, and a way of engaging with Purcell's fugal music on its own terms, rather than accounting for its characteristics on the basis of the influence of other composers and works. This part of the project has obvious potential for extension to the works of other composers, both on the basis of comparison with Purcell (did other composers use similar methods?) and at a more general level by making the identification of compositional conceits, not necessary fugal, the basis for the study of the genesis of the music. Finally, it integrates specifically musical insights with what we know of contemporary artistic theories in other domains, offering for the first time a way of contextualising Purcell's interest in formal counterpoint that does not rely on notions of conservatism that have arguably been exaggerated by commentators ever since the early eighteenth century.

Among the most suggestive implications is the potential of these approaches to provide a way out of what has become an increasingly repetitive and circular discourse surrounding the consort music and sonatas, by focussing attention on the evidence concerning Purcell's compositional aims and achievements that survives in the final texts of the works. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the degree of concentration both on particular aspects of Purcell's compositional armoury and particular passages within his music is unlikely to be sustained in future studies; nor would this necessarily be desirable for material designed for wider dissemination. Rather it is to be hoped that the approach taken above will help to focus attention on the shortcomings of previous methods where these exist, and form the basis of a

deeper analysis that is able to illuminate Purcell's attitude towards musical artifice within the context of existing (and indeed future) concerns such as Purcell's harmonic language. A certain element of caution is also appropriate when considering the extent to which many of the individual insights derived from analysis of the final texts of works can be verified, in the absence of surviving materials that preserve such small details of compositional process in the hand of the composer. Even if we insist on the hypothetical nature of the reconstruction of specific decisions made at particular moments in the text, however, the sheer number of such decisions that seem to privilege the notion of contrapuntal artifice strongly suggests that the overall picture proposed is representative of Purcell's wider compositional goals.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the situation of Purcell's promotion of musical artifice alongside the strikingly similar concerns of some of his English contemporaries working in other artistic domains offers a valuable alternative contextualisation to his conventional positioning within the diachronic sequence of musical history, according to which he is inevitably understood as a figure of 'transition', between the late renaissance flowering of English instrumental music and the mature baroque of Bach and Handel. This allows us to assess his compositional aims on the basis of the likely artistic principles he held, rather than as part of an overarching history of music viewed from a modern perspective.

The hitherto relatively confined focus of the study, centred on Purcell's early chamber music, offers considerable scope for future extension into other areas of Purcell's œuvre and the development of his approach to 'fuge' over the course of his career. An obvious starting point would be the vocal music of the late 1670s, and my own studies have suggested that very similar principles apply here to those that I have observed in the fantasias.² Further investigation is required to establish both what happens to the general principle of artifice as a compositional goal in Purcell's later works, and how the particular approaches examined above evolved in the course of his career; of particular interest here is the later instrumental music composed for the theatre and for Purcell's court and Cecilian odes, which has often been described as increasingly Italianate. In addition, work in other areas of Purcell's output might

² See my forthcoming article 'Composition as an Act of Performance: Artifice and Expression in Purcell's Sacred Part Song "Since God so Tender a Regard"', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 131 (at press, scheduled for publication in December 2006).

possibly reveal evidence in the form of manuscript sources that does support some of the assertions I have made about Purcell's approach to fugal composition, thus providing further evidence for those aspects of his technique that cannot be supported in connection with the instrumental music of the earliest part of his career. Equally, it may be that further advances in the understanding of musical memory and improvisatory practices, including perhaps new information culled from contemporary theoretical discussions, can reveal more about how Purcell was able to process such large amounts of information concerning the fugal interaction of his subject materials, enabling us to understand more fully both the processes that gave rise to particular characteristics in his music and the reasons behind the absence of written materials that could be used to confirm such observations.

A renewed interest and understanding in both the technical aspects and the early reception history of Purcell's chamber music also offers considerable grounds for optimism concerning the general appreciation of his works today. The popularity of the consort of viols as an amateur pursuit has given a larger number of people first-hand access to Purcell's music for viols. The current wealth of accomplished professional consorts, meanwhile, offers a wider public the opportunity to hear these works performed in suitably intimate venues, by musicians who have a profound understanding of Purcell's technical and expressive resources, which they are able to convey through their playing. The same can be said of the sonatas, which have benefited greatly from increased knowledge of contemporary instruments and performance practice. One might add to this the notable importance of the recorded music industry to the modern 'early music' movement: the availability of performances of these works on compact disc or over the internet offers any listener the opportunity to experience the music 'from within', and supports repeated listening to an extent that was inconceivable even two hundred years after Purcell's death.

While it may not be particularly large, the continuity of the public market for Purcell's music can offer a lifeline to the kind of popular understanding of his instrumental works explored in Chapter 1. The viol player John Bryan perpetuates the association of Purcell's fantasias with the popular conception of 'late' style despite their composition at the start of Purcell's career:

Henry Purcell's *Fantazias* and *In Nomines* belong to that rare group of pieces such as Bach's *Art of Fugue* and the late Beethoven quartets, whose profundity appears to be at odds with any obvious reason for their existence. They are an extraordinary

conclusion to the long tradition of English viol consort music, and their intensity of expression can still surprise us, more than three hundred years after the composer's untimely death.³

The sense of wonder and mystery in such descriptions undoubtedly contributes to Purcell's attraction in the current musical climate, but in an age when the application of Romantic notions of creativity and artistic expression to earlier repertoires is viewed with increasing suspicion, it may be that alternative ways of understanding his art are increasingly in demand. Purcell's most extraordinary moments of artifice will always inspire some measure of awe. The understanding of his music from the perspective of his compositional strategies adds to this a degree of humanity that can only increase our admiration of Purcell's expressive achievements in his fantasias and sonatas.

³ John Bryan, liner notes to Purcell: Fantazias (Rose Consort of Viols, Naxos 8.553957; released 1997).

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